

# ***HAAL AHWAL***

Monthly News Reviews on Food and Agriculture

**November, 2023**

**Roots for Equity**



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**November, 2023**

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**Roots for Equity**



## **Index**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Preface	I
Glossary	III
Points to Ponder	VI
News Excerpts	XV
National News	XXVIII
International News	XXXVI

## Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APO	Asian Productivity Organization
APSEA	All Pakistan Solvent Extractors Association
AQI	Air Quality Index
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
BRI	Belt and Road Initiatives
CASA-1000	Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade
CATIC	China National Aero-technology Import and Export Corporation
CDWP	Central Development Working Party
COP-28	UN Climate Change Conference
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DRAP	Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan
EAD	Economic Affairs Division
ECC	Economic Coordination Committee
Ecneec	Executive Committee of the National Economic Council
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFBL	Fauji Fertilizer Bin Qasim
FPCCI	Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GLOF	UN backed Glacial Lake Outburst Flood
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
GSP+	Generalised System of Preferences Plus
HBFC	House Building Finance Company Limited



HDT	Haq Do Tehreek
HEC	Higher Education Commission
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IDF	International Diabetes Federation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Department
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IIOJK	Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japan's International Cooperation Agency
JPMC	Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre
KBP	Kissan Board Pakistan
KOICA	Korean International Cooperation Agency
KU	Karachi University
MMPA	Marine Mammal Protection Act
MNFS&R	Ministry of National Food Security and Research
MoI&P	Ministry of Industries and Production
MoUs	Memorandums of Understanding
Nespak	National Engineering Services of Pakistan
NPO	National Productivity Organization
Passco	Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation
PBF	Pakistan Business Forum
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PCGA	Pakistan Cotton Ginnery Association
PDM	Pakistan Democratic Movement

PFA	Punjab Food Authority
PFM	Public Financial Management
PHMA	Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association
PIA	Pakistan International Airlines
Pims	Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences
PPRA	Public Procurement Regulatory Authority
PRI	Poultry Research Institute
PSC	Progressive Students Collective
PSDP	Public Sector Development Programme
PWC	Punjab Water Council
SAU	Sindh Agriculture University
SBP	State Bank of Pakistan
SCCI	Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SFERP	Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project
SIFC	Special Investment Facilitation Council
SPI	Sensitive Price Index
TCP	Trading Corporation of Pakistan
UAF	University of Agriculture Faisalabad
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Unicef	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID-ERDA	USAID’s Economic Recovery and Development Activity
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPI	Wholesale Price Index
YoY	Year-on-Year

# Points to Ponder

## Colonial Tendencies

Agriculture production is the center of Pakistan's economy is a fact and needs no reiteration. However, the sector is besieged by many ills of which the main is the consistent dependency on resources external to the country. There are many examples of such tendencies.

According to the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kauser Malik, Sino-Pak agricultural ties and joint efforts will help address the issue of food security and to learn from each other's experiences. Similarly, the Alternative Livelihoods Options project, a five-year project worth \$1.3 million finished recently; it was meant to teach women improved agricultural practices and increasing their access to new, alternative crops. According to the US Ambassador Donald A Blome, who participated in a closing event of the project, "the achievements (of the project) are far-reaching," and has "helped establish fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, and irrigation systems benefitting more than 25,000 people." In addition, USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (ERDA) is collaborating with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Agriculture Research and local farmers, in pioneering an innovative approach to certified wheat seed production in District Mardan.

Through the many decades that Pakistan has received back-breaking loans and other grants to help us 'develop,' the outcome has been disappointing. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when we are confronting climate crisis, global warming is a vicious reality destroying millions of acres of land and livelihood: can countries like the US and China, who have a history of chemical intensive, ecologically suicidal agricultural systems teach Pakistani farmers how to practice agriculture production?

The Food Ministry has announced that no seeds, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), would be permitted into the country without complying with the prescribed Plant Quarantine Regulations and Seed Regulations. But such a compelling directive is actually misleading.

The government is requesting a technical and commercial research report for potential import of GMO seeds for oil extraction and meal production. There is no dialogue nationally on a controversial issue as GMOs, especially with farming communities, while the emphasis is to study global standard operating procedures and sanitary and phytosanitary protocols for GMO soybean seed importation. Apart from the corporate driven Sanitary and Phytosanitary Mechanisms and Technical Barriers to Trade agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO), on the question of seeds, one must always remember that Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement of the WTO. TRIPs and other WTO agreements have strangled agriculture economy of third world countries because, based on these agreements, mega-corporations of rich industrial countries have been able to capture local production and markets in food and agriculture. Global standards are for mega corporations of the rich industrial countries, and is the absolute opposite of the concept of food sovereignty.

One good news, at least on the surface, is that the Sindh livestock department and the Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tando Jam have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for preservation of indigenous cattle breeds such as Sindhi Kundhi buffalo, Sindhi red cow and other breeds.

In the end, our focus on development is based on having faith not in the peasant class, which is directly responsible for much of the wealth generated through agriculture production as can be seen from financial gain of PKR 400 billion with the increase of 4 million tons of wheat production in 2022-23. Additionally, \$3 billion has been earned from the export of basmati and coarse rice this year. The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has stated that said Pakistan's exports in rice, and sesame seed increased by 13.5 percent, while the trade deficit decreased by 4.5 percent during the same period.

But the contribution of the small and landless farmers to the economy is ignored, while, there is no end to recommendations on collaboration with government research institutions, the private sector among others. For

instance, the Sindh Agricultural University Vice Chancellor, Dr Fateh Marri has pointed out that over 3.5 million tons of valuable banana waste was burnt every year although it could be used to produce by-products, including fiber, composite fertilizers, confectionery and cosmetics. His suggestion is to form a banana research group comprising public, private and industrial sectors along with research institutes and growers, and hoped that this group could become part of World Banana Forum. The word ‘growers’ invariably means rich farmers, and not the peasantry itself.

At the same time, agriculturists, economists, progressive farmers and researchers have lamented the situation where agriculture sector in Sindh is hostage to commission agents, who, instead of farmers, fix prices of farm products. In Punjab, farmers have been raising complaints on the non-availability of fertilizers, and pointing to overcharging of the commodity by dealers. Urea was being sold at PKR 4,200-4,500 per bag against the government-prescribed price of PKR 3,600 per bag, while DAP prices were around PKR 13,500 per bag, with many police reports being filed against dealers for black marketing.

The Punjab government had fixed wheat sowing target for 2023-24 at 16 million acres to achieve a target of 25.6 million tons, but given shortfall and black marketing of inputs will this be possible? Even if it is possible, given shortage of oil and gas fuel as a critical input for their production, where does it leave us in the long run? The government is reportedly engaged with Russia, China and Azerbaijan for purchase of 0.2 million tons of urea fertilizer for the Rabi season. Is it feasible, given our huge debt, that we continue to rely on chemical fertilizers that are on one hand are expensive and detrimental to climate and soil fertility, and on the other, based on dependency of external sources?

It also needs to be emphasized that infrastructure development is often not finished in time; the caretaker government has indicated that work on the construction of Daducha Dam with an escalated cost of Rs10 billion has been resumed, while three key water sector projects face funding shortfall.

## **Push for Exports with Hunger at Home**

In general, there has been an increase in exports in the country. According to the Pakistan Statistical Bureau (PSB), higher shipments to China, and exports to nine regional countries resulted in a year-on-year growth of 14.3 percent in the first four months of the current fiscal year. Pakistan's merchandise exports increased for the second month in a row after a year-long downward trend, data released by PBS. In absolute terms, the exports were recorded at \$2.70 billion in October against \$2.38 billion over the corresponding month of last year (20222), amounting to a growth of 13.55 percent. The textile and clothing exports recovered, with a recorded growth of 5.92 percent, with exports rising to \$1.44 billion, up from \$1.35 billion in the same month last year.

Similarly, raw food products saw an export surge of almost 60 percent in October. Apart from basmati rice, meat exports were worth \$152.58 million in the 4MFY24 in comparison to \$128.46 million over last year, achieving a growth of 18.77 percent. Increase in meat exports is based on reaching new markets that include Jordan, Egypt, and Uzbekistan.

From February to August, sugar export figures reached 248,854 tons against no exports recorded over the comparable period of last year. Fruit exports, in the first four months of the FY24 increased 13.53 percent to \$108.99 million against \$96.003 million over last year. All other food exports increased by 13.88 percent to \$404.52 million in the first four months of the FY24 from \$355.22 million in comparison to the corresponding months of last year. In the same period, only fish and fish product exports worth \$123.86 million saw a decline of 7.96 percent from a year ago of \$134.57 million.

Fish and fish exports have declined. However, Pakistan has successfully secured a two-year extension (December 2025) to continue the commercial export of fish and fish products to the United States. This decision by the US administration exempts Pakistan from adhering to the standards outlined in the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 2016, to offer additional time for aligning fishing practices with US environmental standards.

The result of increased food exports resulted in higher prices for consumers at home. It has been reported that ‘unchecked exports’ resulted in a high food inflation of 29 percent in October, 2023, making access to essential food items such as wheat flour, rice, sugar, meat and vegetables difficult.

### **Tug-of wars**

Contesting news reports point to, at the least, lack of coherency in food and agricultural directives. There have been unprecedented high sugar prices at PRK 200/kg that resulted in the ECC imposing an export ban from August 10, 2023. A relevant point regarding sugar production is though profits accumulated by the sugar industry, there is big gap in fair prices for sugarcane. The caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh, fixed the minimum price of sugar cane at PKR 425 per 40 kg, whereas Punjab has fixed it at PKR 400 for the same quantity. However, in Punjab, farmers have rejected the sugarcane support price demanding that it should be raised to PKR 500 per 40 kg, at least. Various farmers’ platforms have been contesting the price, as well as highlighting the bias in favor of the industry and not farmers.

Similar tussle is apparent with respect to government policy and industry. The Pakistan Flour Mills Association has rejected the wheat issue price of PKR 4,700 per 40kg announced by the food authorities. The Association pointed out that adding PKR 800 per 40kg as incidental charges to the cost of grain procured by the government at PKR 3,900 per 40kg from the farmers was not fair.

The question of food security is also quite muddled. The National Food Security Ministry has announced that the country has well-stocked wheat reserves, as federal and provincial food departments have total stock of 6.934 million tons of wheat. At the same time, according to European traders, the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP), has issued an international tender to purchase and import 110,000 metric tons of wheat.

The presence of ‘trawler mafia’ in Gwadar robbing the local fishermen in Makran of their livelihood is being raised, as well. Chairman Hidayatur

Rehman Baloch, Haq Do Tehreek (HDT) has pointed out human rights abuses faced by the Tehreek in advocating for their rights; in spite of promises by the previous government, workers and leaders holding protests have been tortured and arrested.

Apart from the fisher folk facing scarce livelihood there is also ongoing marine ecological crisis which also fails to get government attention.

According to a World Bank study in Pakistan, there was a link between malnutrition and poor quality of water which inhibited the absorption of healthy minerals in the body. According to Dr Alvi, the President of Pakistan, climate and water emergency had exposed the underlying dysfunctions in global, national, and local economies, that failed to produce economic, environmental, and social justice for people. He proposed developing platforms with the involvement of the communities to encourage them to follow preparedness, and resilience initiatives on water conservation

### **Food Security or Market Security?**

Climate change and rising global temperatures have affected marine ecosystems, as well as fresh water upstream of the Indus River delta. A result has been a decline in fish catch, impacting fisherfolk's income. The Ministry of Food Security, Government of Pakistan through its Fisheries Development Board will develop a digital link through a website to bring together various stakeholders (farmers, auctioneers, whole-sellers, processors and retailers); the website will be providing fish farmers information on market price as well as demand for fish in national local markets. Public and private sectors will be supported to further fish production, especially in in Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkha, shortly. One does wonder though, can the vast bulk of fisherfolk engage in such a digital platform?

Pakistan and China are emphasizing controlling livestock diseases, so as to enhance the growth potential in order to increase per animal production and solve livestock health issues. The federal government has provided PKR 36.6 million, Export Development Fund to build a 'center of



excellence’ at an estimated cost of Rs200 million to protect the Kinnow crop against different diseases.

One has to ask, are these measures for the majority who comprise of small and landless farmers, fisherfolk, or is for the rich industrial sector, and the traders?

## **Policy Directives and Directions**

Pakistan remains a highly indebted country. The past months have shown Pakistan to be near bankruptcy and default. Almost four months down the road things remain on shaky footings. Based on AidData, US international development research institution, Pakistan is the third biggest recipient of Chinese development finance worldwide; only two per cent of China’s portfolio in Pakistan between 2000 and 2021 consisted of grants while the rest was in the form of loans. 2017 onwards, Chinese finance has been mostly for rescue loans rather than developmental projects.

Saudi Arabia has rolled over the \$3 billion deposit facility for another year to support State Bank of Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves which may fall to below \$4 billion in case the amount is withdrawn.

Pakistan’s development policy has included attracting international investment. The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been playing a key role in Pakistan and Kuwait venturing into seven Memorandum of Understandings for investments amounting to \$10 billion, in various fields such as mining, food security and environment. Similarly, under the SIFC, leaders of UAE and Pakistan, witnessed by the Chief of Army Staff, have also signed MoUs worth billions of dollars to boost economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries.

## **Loans and Conditionalities**

It is expected that there will be no roadblocks to the IMF’s release of about \$710 million second tranche of \$3 billion Standby Arrangement (SBA), most probably to be released in December. However, the Fund,

and the World Bank have raised concerns over SIFC, advising against creation of a group of preferred investors.

At the same time, industry leaders in the country want the government to seek other sources of cheaper external financing; the current business environment is difficult due to the high electricity, gas and petroleum prices.

### **Gutwrenching Neoliberal Policies, Development Fiascos and Climate Change**

The thrust of neoliberalism continues to be trade and investment, along with privatization. Privatization of PIA, and outsourcing of airport operations are still on the books. Climate crisis continues to be a major disruptive force in economic development especially agriculture. Global warming is ever present, to play havoc with agriculture production as well as communities. For instance, Himalayan glaciers are supposed to lose up to 75 percent of their ice by the century's end, according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain. Avalanches, and lake bursts are a feature of Northern areas of Pakistan.

An Islamabad-based climate change expert has pointed to the use of fossil fuels in energy, transport, industries and agriculture for the emission of greenhouse gases (mainly carbon dioxide and methane), which are the main reason for escalating global temperatures. As has been iterated numerous times, Pakistan's global carbon emissions are less than one percent.

According to the caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Pakistan is facing a trade-off between raising climate finance and development finance, as seeking money for climate finance negatively impacts development finance. The country needs an estimated investment of \$340 billion to address climate and development challenges between 2023 and 2030.

## People's Responses

Given the continued price escalation in essential goods and services, especially food, energy and transport, and lack of decent livelihood, there have been many protests happening across the country. While Metrobus security staff have been protesting as they had not been paid their salaries for three months, Karachi University, and Karakoram University students have been agitating against tuition fee hike. In Punjab University, students were marching for revival of student unions in educational institutions across the country.

The brutal war by the Zionist State of Israel continues and people across Pakistan, as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir have been standing in solidarity with Palestinians across the country. In particular, the presence of schoolchildren in street marches is noteworthy given the US-led Zionist aggression in Palestine has been especially targeting children.

1 Hectare = 2.471 Acres

1 Acre = 4,840 Square Yards

1 Ton = 25 Mann = 1000 Kg

1 Mann = 40 Kg

# NEWS EXCERPTS

## National News

### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- Agriculturists, economists, progressive farmers and researchers have lamented the situation where agriculture sector in Sindh is hostage to commission agents, who, instead of farmers, fix prices of farm products.
- SAU vice chancellor Dr Fateh Marri said that over 3.5 million tonnes of valuable banana waste was burnt every year although it could be used to produce by-products, including fiber, composite fertilisers, confectionery and cosmetics.
- Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kauser Abdulla Malik has said that Sino-Pak agricultural ties and joint efforts will help address the issue of food security and to learn from each other's experiences. He addressed participants of 4th Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) Sino-Pak agricultural forum arranged by the Institute of Horticultural Science, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).
- US Ambassador Donald A Blome participated in a closing event of a five-year, \$1.3 million US Embassy-funded sustainable farming programme.
- The caretaker Punjab government is set to resume work on the construction of Daducha Dam with an escalated cost of Rs10 billion
- Three key water sector development projects under the PM's National Agriculture Emergency Programme and designed to increase crop yields leading to gaining self-sufficiency in food suffer a major setback as funding for these projects has been delayed.
- The World Bank mission has said that 11 flood detention dams are being built under the irrigation department's Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (SFERP) for harvesting rainwater to recharge groundwater and turn wastelands into fertile farmland.
- With the completion of eight under-construction water and hydropower projects of Wapda, the carry over water capacity in the country will increase from 30 days to 45 days with an addition of 9.7MAF water storage.
- Per capita water availability in the country has declined from 5650 cubic meter in 1951 to an alarming level of 908 cubic meter per annum, pushing us to the stage of water-scarce country.
- President Dr Arif Alvi terming water scarcity a big challenge for the climate-hit Pakistan. He regarded water-related disasters including shortages as the major sign of climate emergency.

- Dr Alvi said a World Bank study in Pakistan showed a link between malnutrition and poor quality of water which inhibited the absorption of healthy minerals in the body.

## **AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

- Farmers and their representative organisation are complaining about either non-availability of fertilisers or overcharging by the dealers.
- The Punjab government has fixed the wheat sowing target for the season 2023-24 at 16 million acres to achieve a target of 25.6 million tons.
- Normal urea price was Rs 4200-4500 per bag against the government-prescribed price of Rs 3600 per bag, while DAP prices were hovering around Rs 13500 per bag.
- The government is reportedly engaged with Russia, China and Azerbaijan for purchase of 0.2 million tons of urea fertiliser for Rabi season
- Agriculture authorities have assured the farming community that ample availability of farm inputs, including seed and fertiliser, will be ensured in the open market for the ongoing Rabi season.
- During ongoing month, FIRs have been registered against 182 dealers involved in over-pricing and black marketing of fertilisers across the province and of them 92 handed over to the police, besides a sum of over Rs10.781 million has been recovered as fine. As many as 29,984 bags of fertilisers worth Rs10.08m have also been confiscated.
- The food ministry has announced that no seeds, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), would be permitted into the country without complying with the prescribed Plant Quarantine Regulations and Seed Regulations.
- Caretaker federal minister Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik called for a technical and commercial research report within a week regarding the potential import of GMO seeds for oil extraction and meal production. Secretary Ministry of National Food Security retired Captain Muhammad Mahmood proposed forming a committee comprising key stakeholders to study global standard operating procedures and sanitary and phytosanitary protocols for GMO soybean seed importation.
- USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (ERDA) in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Agriculture Research and local farmers, is pioneering an innovative approach to certified wheat seed production in District Mardan.
- Pakistan, being the 8th largest wheat producer globally and the 3rd largest in Asia, has a significant stake in agriculture, contributing 7.8 percent of the value added in the sector and 1.8 percent of the country's GDP.

- In KP, the yield of wheat has remained low as compared to other provinces. The average yield in Punjab and Sindh is 2.9 tons/hectare, while average yield of wheat in KP is 1.56 tons/hectare.
- The annual wheat seed requirement of KP is around 30,000 tons, while only 7 percent (2,100 tons) of certified wheat seed is available to farmers.

## **AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT**

- Cotton production will remain at 6.9 million bales in Punjab during the season 2023-24 against the target of 8.2 million bales set at the start of the season.
- The data released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association showed that around 6.8m bales arrived at ginning factories till Oct 31 which is 82pc more on a year-on-year basis.
- During 2023-24, the total domestic production of cotton is likely to remain between 9 and 9.5m bales, around 2m bales short of the target of 11.5m bales set by the Federal Committee on Agriculture.
- Caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh fixed the minimum price of sugar cane at Rs425 per 40 kg for the crop 2023-24.
- Growers from Punjab and Sindh will be selling sugarcane at different prices and distorting the national market. Sindh has announced a rate of Rs425 per maund, whereas Punjab has fixed it at Rs400 for the same quantity.
- Over 7.3 million bales of seed cotton have reached ginning factories across Pakistan as of November 15, 2023.
- Farmers have rejected the sugarcane support price of Rs400 per maund announced by the Punjab government for the crushing season 2023-24 and demanded that it should be raised to Rs500 per maund at least.
- The Ministry of National Food Security and Research said that the country was able to achieve a financial benefit of Rs400 billion with the increase of 4 million tonnes of wheat production in 2022-23.
- MNFS&R informed that wheat availability for 2023-24 was estimated at 29.81 MMTs, comprising production of 28.18 MMT and public carry-forward stock of 1.63 MMTs.
- Bumper wheat production this season would be sufficient to cater to national consumption, however, for maintaining strategic reserves of 2 MMTs, there would be a shortfall of 2.40 MMTs for the year 2023-24.
- Public sector (PASSCO & Provincial Food Departments) could only achieve 75% assigned target of wheat procurement, 5.97MMTs against 7.80MMTs assigned target.
- The country is currently well-stocked with wheat reserves as both the federal and provincial food departments have reported a total stock of 6.934m tonnes of wheat.

- Passco has a stock of 1.78 million tonnes, Punjab 4.021m tonnes, Sindh 0.817m tonnes, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 0.227m tonnes and Balochistan 0.089m tonnes.
- The Pakistan Flour Mills Association rejected wheat issue price of Rs4,700 per maund.
- The wheat forcibly bought at Rs3,900 per maund is now being sold at a rate of Rs4,700 per maund by the government, demanding immediate downward revision of the rate.
- A government agency has issued an international tender to purchase and import 110,000 metric tons of wheat, European traders said.
- The caretaker government has claimed that 7.2m metric tonnes of wheat stocks are currently available in the country, denying that there is any shortage of this commodity.
- The federal government has released Rs36.6m funds under the Export Development Fund to build a 'centre of excellence' at an estimated cost of Rs200m to protect the Kinnow crop against different diseases.

## **NON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

- The Chairman of Haq Do Tehreek (HDT), has called on the caretaker government to intervene and halt the ongoing marine ecological crisis in Balochistan waters and take immediate action against the trawler mafia engaged in illegal fishing.
- Capture fisheries are on the decline in the country due to number of factors including climate change and rising global temperature regime. The impact of the Global Climate Changes is also affecting the ecosystem of Marine, Brakish water and fresh water upstream of the Indus River delta.
- Strengthened Pakistan-China relations will help control livestock diseases and harness the growth potential in order to increase per animal production and solve livestock health issues.
- Prof Dr Farzana Rizvi said that half of the agriculture in Pakistan's GDP consists of livestock. He Cheng said that livestock accounts for 11.3% of Pakistan's GDP and according to 2020 statistics, there are 211 million buffaloes, cows, camels and sheep in Pakistan.
- The Sindh livestock department and the Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tando Jam have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for preservation of indigenous cattle breeds such as Sindhi Kundhi buffalo, Sindhi red cow and other breeds. The two sides agreed on the expansion of artificial insemination technology for the breeding of indigenous cattle species.
- Punjab Livestock Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad has said that the Poultry Act will be mandatory for all poultry premises across the Punjab.

## TRADE

- The trade deficit narrowed by 4.46 per cent on a year-on-year basis and stood at \$2.099 billion compared in October 2023 compared to \$2.197 billion during the same month of last fiscal year.
- Pakistan's merchandise export proceeds were recorded at \$2.70bn in October against \$2.38bn over the corresponding month of last year, indicating a growth of 13.55pc.
- The commerce ministry reported that more than 1,600 textile units were closed down in the past 16 months.
- The imports also rose by 4.91pc to \$4.80bn in October from \$4.58bn in the same month last year.
- From 2014 to 2022, Pakistan's exports to the EU increased by 108% whereas imports from the EU increased by 65% and the total trade volume increased from EUR 8.3 billion in 2013 to EUR 14.85 billion.
- Punjab Agriculture Minister S.M. Tanvir claims that country has earned \$3 billion from the export of basmati and coarse rice this year.
- Exports to the Middle East bounced back with a growth of 21.38 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year from a year ago.
- Pakistan's exports to European nations witnessed a 12.13 per cent decline in the first quarter of the current fiscal year compared to the same period last year.
- In FY23, the export of EU dropped 4.41pc to \$8.188bn from \$8.566bn in the preceding fiscal year.
- Pakistan Business Forum said Pakistan's exports increased by 13.5% in October 2023, reaching a total of \$2.7bn and trade deficit also decreased by 4.5% during same period.
- Textile and clothing export value of textile and clothing exports shrank 6.33pc in the first four months (July-October) FY24 to \$5.56bn from \$5.94bn in the corresponding period last year.
- The export of raw food products recorded an upsurge of almost 60 per cent in October compelling domestic consumers to pay higher prices. These unchecked exports pushed food inflation to a staggering 29pc in Oct.
- Food exports grew 30.29 per cent in the first four months of fiscal year 2023-24 to \$1.944 billion from \$1.492bn over the corresponding months of last year.
- Pakistan exported \$152.58m worth of meat in 4MFY24 from \$128.46m over last year, showing a growth of 18.77pc.
- During the period spanning from February to August, the sugar export figures reached an impressive 248,854 tonnes
- Export of fruits saw an increase of 13.53pc in first four months to \$108.99m against \$96.003m over last year.



- Pakistan exported fish and fish products worth \$123.86m in first four months of FY24, decline of 7.96pc from a year ago of \$134.57m.
- Pakistan has successfully secured a two-year extension until Dec 31, 2025 to continue the commercial export of fish and fish products to the United States.
- Driven by higher shipments to China, the exports to nine regional countries witnessed a year-on-year growth of 14.3 percent during first four months of the current fiscal year.
- Pakistan has exported at least 125,000 cotton bales this season and the quantum is set to improve further during the current crop season.
- The country exported just 4,900 bales in 2022-23, 16,000 bales in 2021-22 and 70,200 bales in 2020-21.
- Pakistani traders have finalized deals for the import of over 1.3 million metric tons of wheat to meet the domestic demand and stabilize the commodity prices.
- The federal government has reportedly decided to import 0.2 million tons of urea on G2G basis preferably from China.
- The federal government has no plan to import wheat through Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) as the private sector is importing wheat to meet the domestic demand. Secretary NFS&R.
- Private sector has estimated import of about 3 million tons of wheat for domestic consumption as the country is facing some shortage of the commodity.
- ECC of the Cabinet has decided that the option of import of 200 KMTs fertiliser through government-to-government arrangement be explored in the first instance
- Petroleum group imports witnessed a negative growth of 16.93 percent during the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year and stood at \$5.029 billion when compared to \$6.054 billion during the same period of last fiscal year.
- ECC of the cabinet decided to import 220,000 tonnes of urea from Azerbaijan

## **CORPORATE SECTOR**

- ECC of the Cabinet has decided that uninterrupted gas supply will continue for Fatima Fertilizer and Agritech plants to ensure sufficient supply of urea fertilizer for Rabi season 2023-24.

## **INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN**

- Pakistan is the third biggest recipient of Chinese development finance worldwide with a portfolio of \$70.3 billion.
- Pakistan's public debt exposure to China is \$67.2bn, which is 19.6pc of GDP.

- Pakistan and Kuwait will soon sign seven MoUs for investments worth \$10 billion in Pakistan through seven projects in multiple fields, including environment, mining, and food security.
- A special session of Apex Committee of SIFC has unanimously approved various initiatives to be broached with friendly countries
- Pakistan and UAE signed multibillion dollars MoUs in Abu Dhabi in a range of areas to boost economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries.
- Saudi Arabia has rolled over \$3bn deposit facility for another year to support SBP foreign exchange reserves which may fall to below \$4bn in case amount is withdrawn.
- On Sept 4, Mr Kakar said Pakistan's untapped mineral deposits are conservatively valued at about \$6 trillion. Pakistan is trying to bring Saudi and UAE investment for Reko Diq which has a large amount of gold, copper and other minerals.

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

- The country borrowed \$3.847 billion from multiple financing sources during the first four months (July-October).
- If the IMF and UAE inflows are added, the total inflows would reach \$6.047 billion during the first four months of the current fiscal year.
- Government had budgeted estimates of \$4.5b from foreign commercial banks for the current fiscal year 2023-24, however, no money was received under this head during the first four months of the current fiscal year.
- The country borrowed \$10.844 billion from multiple financing sources including \$2.206 billion from foreign commercial banks during the fiscal year 2022-23 against the budgeted foreign assistance of \$22.817 billion.
- ADB announced that it had approved \$250 million in loans to Pakistan for improving its power transmission network in Punjab and KP
- ADB announced that it had approved a \$180 million loan to improve water supply and solid waste management services in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur.
- IMF has advised Pakistan against creating a group of preferred investors or distortions in country under SIFC & to ensure transparency and accountability in its business deals.
- IMF reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the first review of a short-term loan deal, which will unlock about \$700 million next month.
- Extending a cautious welcome to the Staff-Level Agreement, the business community believes that the time has come to generate more resources to boost trade and industry instead of approaching IMF again in April next year.

- IFC committed to inject over \$1.5 billion into Pakistan`s economy in the form of short and long-term investments aimed at catapulting the country into a new era of prosperity and development.
- The World Bank (WB) has approved the restructuring of the financing agreement of the Public Financial Management (PFM) and Accountability for Service Delivery Programme worth \$380 million.
- Martin Raiser, the World Bank`s regional vice president for South Asia said the government`s objective in creating SIFC might be good and such steps could help once or twice, but it was no solution to Pakistan`s challenges, which could only be addressed by improving the business climate, providing a level playing field and removing distortions and tax exemptions.
- The World Bank while pointing out six major challenges facing Pakistan`s economy has launched a series of policy notes that outline critical policy shifts required for a productive, sustainable, resilient, and healthy Pakistan. The policy notes—focusing on child stunting fiscal sustainability, private sector growth, energy, learning poverty, agriculture, and climate change.

## **POLICY**

- The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) cleared nine development projects worth about Rs224 billion in various sectors.
- Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has said that it approved 21 development projects costing US\$3 billion for flood-affected areas after securing maximum pledges committed in Geneva for 2022 flood.
- The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has authorised Rs300.9b (31.67%), including Rs26.3 billion foreign exchange component, in July to October 2023-24 against Rs950 billion total budgeted allocation for development projects under PSDP.
- The caretaker government informed Senate that the plan to privatise the loss-making national flag carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), is still there besides outsourcing its airport operations in line with an IMF deal.
- The Privatisation Commission has decided to complete the privatisation process of HBFC by 15th December 2023.
- Lahore recorded an alarming Air Quality Index (AQI) of 439, an AQI below 50 is considered safe for breathing.
- The first-of-its-kind flora and fauna study showed that Sindh`s Tharparkar region hosts 149 species of plants, 205 of birds, 41 of mammals, 31 of reptiles, and 1,065 invertebrate and amphibian species. It found three birds and one plant species to be critically endangered, two birds and one plant species to be endangered, six birds vulnerable, and 10 birds, one mammal and one reptile to be near-threatened.

- Government are working on a plan to start a health insurance programme for the poorest people, who make up 20% of the country's population.
- Every 4th person in Pakistan is suffering from diabetes which causes eye problems, heart and kidney diseases.
- More than 33m people in Pakistan are suffering from diabetes.
- More than three-quarters of people living with diabetes in Pakistan, or around 79%. Over a third (34 per cent) of those living with diabetes in the country didn't receive information about complications at the point of diagnosis.
- The Finance Division rejected a request by the federal health ministry to provide a supplementary Rs11 billion for the smooth functioning of hospitals.
- The Finance Division has informed the health ministry in writing that, as per the preconditions of IMF, funds can only be released in case of a disaster.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS**

- The federal government's total debt (domestic and external) stocks recorded a decline of 2.6 percent in September 2023 compared to August 2023.
- SBP reported that the central government's total domestic and external debt stocks fell to Rs 62.291 trillion at the end of September 2023 compared to a historic level of Rs 63.9 trillion at the end of August 2023.
- Caretaker Privatisation Minister said from 2018-21, government spent Rs2.54 trillion under the heads of subsidies, grants and loans to keep commercial SOEs operational, while the size of the government increased by more than three times in the last couple of decades.
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation increased to 26.9 per cent on a year-on-year basis in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 31.4 per cent in the previous month and 26.6 per cent in October 2022.
- The SPI inflation on YoY basis increased to 34.2 per cent in October 2023.
- The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on a YoY basis increased to 24.6 per cent in October 2023.
- The National Consumer Price Index for October 2023 is increased to 1.08 per cent over September 2023 and increased to 26.89 per cent over corresponding month of the last year i.e. October 2022.
- Prices of various medicines have witnessed an increase of 16% to 60% in the market.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

- The country needs an estimated investment of \$340 billion to address climate and development challenges between 2023 and 2030.

- Average global temperature since the start of the industrial age has already risen by 1.2 degrees Celcius and is likely to rise by 1.5 degrees Celcius in the mid-2030s.
- By the end of this century, the annual mean temperature in Pakistan is expected to rise by 3°C to 5°C...” Himalayan glaciers are on track to lose up to 75 per cent of their ice by the century’s end due to global warming

## **CLIMATE DISASTER**

- Lightning killed three men and about 300 cattle heads in different parts of Thar during first showers of winter

## **RESISTANCE**

- The security staff of the metrobus service in Lahore staged a protest, causing a temporary halt in service due to unpaid salaries for the past three months. Up to 700 employees participated in the protest at Kalma Chowk.

# **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

## **TRADE**

- Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei urged Muslim countries to halt trade with Israel, including oil exports, in response to its bombardment of Gaza.
- India has signed contracts to export about 500,000 metric tons of new season basmati rice to cash in on robust demand from top buyers in Europe and the Middle East.

## **CORPORATE SECTOR**

- A Missouri jury ordered Bayer to pay \$1.56 billion to four plaintiffs who claimed the company’s Roundup weedkiller caused injuries including cancer.

## **INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN**

- The United States will lend more than \$550 million for an Indian-led deep-sea container terminal in Sri Lanka, officials said, with the project seen as countering China’s rising influence in the Indian Ocean.

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

- The International Monetary Fund said its executive board approved a proposal for a 50 percent increase in quota resources to be contributed by member countries in proportion to their current IMF shareholdings.

## **POLICY**

- The world is currently producing about 400 million metric tons of plastic waste every year, with less than 10% of it being recycled.
- Today, about 98 per cent of single-use plastic — like bottles or packaging — is derived from fossil fuel, according to the UN Environment Programme.
- UNEP executive director Inger Andersen said nations agreed to develop a treaty that dealt with the entire life cycle of plastics — from production at their source, to their design and use, to final disposal.
- The International Council of Chemical Associations, a global industry body, said the treaty “should be focused on ending plastic pollution, not plastic production”.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- Hazy weather hung over Beijing with conditions in other parts of north China possibly worsening, forecasters said, although cold air sweeping in from the northwest is expected to help dissipate the smog.
- Climate change poses a health threat through increasing weather disasters and extreme heat, the UN said, calling for better warning systems that could be woven into public health policy.
- Between 2000 and 2019, the estimated deaths due to heat were approximately 489,000 per year, it said, adding: the impacts are underestimated as heat-related mortality could be 30 times higher than what is currently recorded.
- The number of medium- or large-scale disaster events “is projected to reach 560 a year — or 1.5 each day — by 2030.
- Nearly one-in-three deaths from non-melanoma skin cancer are caused by working under the sun.
- 1.6bn people of working age (15 years or older) were exposed to solar ultraviolet radiation while working outdoors in 2019, equivalent to 28% of all working-age people.
- In 2019 alone, almost 19,000 people in 183 countries died from non-melanoma skin cancer due to having worked outdoors in the sun.
- Between 2000 and 2019, skin cancer deaths attributable to occupational exposure to sunlight almost doubled increasing by 88pc, from 10,088 deaths in 2000 to 18,960 deaths in 2019.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMICAL CONDITION**

- Over fifty developing economies spend more than 10 per cent of their revenues on interest payments, and 25 countries spend more than 20pc.

- The United Nations called for a significant overhaul of the global financial system to help the world’s poorest countries and their struggle to fill “enormous financial gaps”.
- 46 so-called least developed countries, LDCs, suffered a sharp economic slowdown in FY of pandemic, leaving their combined per capita growth this year 16% below target.
- The food and agriculture system adds at least \$10 trillion in “hidden costs” to the global economy every year due to unhealthy diets, emissions and undernourishment.
- The study found that 73 percent of the hidden costs are linked to bad diets that are high in ultra-processed foods, fats and sugars, causing obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes.
- Almost one billion children are exposed to high or extremely high water stress.
- 739 million children are exposed to high or extremely high water scarcity while 436m children live in areas with high or extremely high water vulnerability besides 470 million children face high or extremely high drought risk.
- A staggering 347m children under 18 are exposed to high or extremely high water scarcity in South Asia, highest number among all regions in the world.
- “Safe water is a basic human right,” said Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF chief for South Asia. Nearly 40% of conventional baby food products analyzed in a new US study were found to contain toxic pesticides, and found at least one pesticide in 22 of them.
- More than 27 million children were driven into hunger and malnutrition by extreme weather events in countries heavily impacted by the climate crisis in 2022, which was a 135 per cent jump from the previous year.
- Children made up nearly half of the 57 million people pushed into crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse across 12 countries because of the extreme weather events in 2022 (about 29 million people in 2018).
- Pakistan, one year on, more than 2 million flood-affected children are acutely malnourished, with almost 600,000 children suffering from the deadliest form of malnutrition.
- Conflict was the primary driver of hunger for 117m people in 19 countries last year.
- Globally, an estimated 774 million children — or one third of the world’s child population — are living with the dual impacts of poverty and high climate risk.
- The socioeconomic “shock” of the Israel-Hamas war will force hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into poverty, a UN report on the conflict’s possible long-term impacts on Gaza and the West Bank warned.

# NATIONAL NEWS

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Stakeholders regret agriculture sector is 'hostage' to commission agents [P. 1]

Sino-Pak agri cooperation to help address food security challenges: minister [P. 1]

US envoy, FAO mark completion of \$1.3m farming project [P. 1]

### 1.1 # Land

Police identify 42 influential land grabbers in Dadu district [P. 2]

### 1.2 # Water

Work on Daducha Dam to start this month [P. 2]

Three key water projects face funding shortfall [P. 2]

World Bank building 11 flood detention dams in Sindh [P. 2]

Completion of 8 water, hydropower projects to boost water storage: Wapda [P. 3]

6th Karachi International Water Conference [P. 3]

## 2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Modernisation linked to better agri productivity [P. 3]

### 2.1 # Fertilizer

Punjab farmers decry fertiliser shortages, overpricing [P. 3]

Urea talks continue with Russia, China, Azerbaijan [P. 4]

Farmers assured of ample inputs supply for Rabi [P. 4]

### 2.2 # Seed

Govt tightens rules for import of GMO seeds [P. 5]

Certified wheat seed production: USAID, KP agri dept join hands [P. 5]

## 3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

### 3.1 # Cash crop

Punjab unlikely to meet 2023-24 cotton production target [P. 6]



Cotton production jumps 82pc [P. 7]

Experts say local cotton not meeting country's textile needs [P. 7]

Sindh govt fixes minimum price of sugar cane at Rs425 per 40kg [P. 7]

Sugar crisis brewing amid differing cane rates [P. 7]

7.3m bales of cotton reach ginning mills [P. 8]

Farmers for increasing sugarcane support price to Rs500/maund [P. 8]

### **3.2 # Food Crop**

High wheat output yields Rs400bn benefit [P. 8]

Wheat procurement: ECC directs ministry to submit action plan [P. 8]

Country well-stocked with wheat reserves: ministry [P. 9]

Govt urged to announce wheat support price [P. 9]

Flour mills reject 'unrealistic' wheat price [P. 9]

TCP tenders to buy 110,000 metric tons of wheat [P. 10]

There's no wheat shortage, Senate told [P. 10]

### **3.3 # Fruits**

Experts propose growing exotic fruits in Gorakh Hills [P. 10]

Over Rs36m funds to save Kinnow from diseases [P. 10]

## **4 # NON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

### **4.1 # Fisheries**

Govt asked to check illegal fishing in Balochistan [P. 11]

80 Indian fishermen released from jail [P. 11]

Balochistan initiates fisheries policy [P. 11]

Climate change, rising global temperature affect fisheries: expert [P. 12]

### **4.2 # Livestock**

UAF, CAU organise Sino-Pak workshop on 'Control of Livestock Diseases' [P. 13]

SAU, livestock dept sign MoU to preserve cattle breeds [P. 13]

### **4.3 # Poultry**

Poultry: finding a new mean [P. 13]

Poultry traders go on strike against uniform rates [P. 13]

Law to regulate poultry sector [P. 14]

### **5 # TRADE**

Govt launches web portal to promote trade [P. 14]

Jul-Oct FY24: Trade deficit shrinks 34.7pc YoY [P. 14]

Merchandise exports grow over 13pc [P. 15]

Afghanistan urges Pakistan to release ‘thousands of containers’ from port [P. 15]

GSP review: EU identifies major challenges facing Pakistan [P. 15]

Pak-Afghan cross-border trade resumes [P. 15]

#### **5.1 # Exports**

Rice exports fetch \$3bn this year: minister [P. 16]

Exports to Middle East jump over 21pc [P. 16]

Trade snags will be removed, Kenyan HC tells rice exporters [P. 16]

Exports to Europe fall despite GSP+ [P. 16]

73pc growth seen in rice, sesame seed exports: PBF [P. 17]

Textile exports rebound [P. 17]

Surging food exports hitting domestic buyers [P. 17]

Govt rejects millers` demand to allow sugar export [P. 18]

US extends exemption related to fish exports [P. 18]

Regional exports grow 14pc [P. 18]

Record cotton exports likely this season [P. 19]

#### **5.2 # Import**

Deals on import of over 1.3MMTs of wheat sealed [P. 19]

Govt decides to import urea on G2G basis [P. 19]

Import of urea exempted from PPRA Rules [P. 19]

'Private sector is in the field' There's no plan to import wheat thru TCP: official [P. 20]

ECC decides to explore option of import through G2G arrangement [P. 20]

Pakistan's wheat import needs will decline: FAO [P. 20]

Petroleum group imports register negative growth of 16.93pc [P. 20]

ECC allows urea imports [P. 20]

Deferred payment basis: \$400m petroleum products imported during Jul-Oct [P. 20]

## **6 # CORPORATE SECTOR**

Notice to foreign firm in Rs650m damages suit [P. 20]

Urea for Rabi season: Gas supply to Fatima, Agritech plants will continue: ECC [P. 21]

Factory sealed for making counterfeit fertiliser [P. 21]

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

Pakistan third top recipient of Chinese finance: study [P. 21]

Flood-hit districts: USAID contributes for agri revitalization [P. 22]

Pakistan, Kuwait to seal \$10bn investment deal [P. 23]

SIFC approves initiatives to be broached with friendly countries [P. 23]

Pakistan, UAE ink MoUs in multiple fields [P. 23]

Saudi govt extends \$3bn deposit for another year: SBP [P. 23]

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

Multiple financing sources: Jul-Oct borrowing down \$0.408m to \$3.847bn YoY: EAD

### **8.1 # Asian Development Bank**

ADB okays \$250m for power networks [P. 24]

Faults found in foreign-funded power projects [P. 25]

ADB gives \$180m for water, waste management [P. 25]

### **8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

IMF contacts key partners directly over fund pledges [P. 25]

IMF raises questions on SIFC creation [P. 25]

Success in IMF review set to unlock \$700m [P. 26]

IMF conditions suppress growth: Industry Leaders [P. 26]

Govt urged to revive five-year development planning [P. 26]

IMF board to approve SLA on Dec 7 [P. 27]

Next budget must adapt to climate change demands, IMF tells Pakistan [P. 27]

### **8.3 # World Bank**

World Bank commits to strengthening BISP [P. 27]

IFC unveils \$1.5bn investment plan for Pakistan [P. 27]

WB approves restructuring of \$380m PFM programme [P. 28]

PD team testifies before Senate panel [P. 28]

World Bank urges Pakistan to look at big picture [P. 28]

More hike in power tariffs opposed: WB to extend \$2bn loan in FY24 [P. 28]

WB points out 6 major challenges facing economy [P. 29]

## **9 # POLICY**

### **9.1 # Developmental Policy**

CDWP okays nine projects to attract international investment [P. 29]

\$3bn projects approved for flood-hit areas [P. 30]

Rs300.9bn authorised for projects under PSDP [P. 31]

### **9.2 # Neo-Liberal Policies**

Caretaker govt tells Senate: PIA sell-off plan still there in line with IMF deal [P. 31]

HBFC sell-off process to be completed by Dec 15th [P. 31]

## **10 # ENVIRONMENT**

Another day of thick smog as AQI touches 439 mark [P. 31]

Punjab govt imposes 'smog emergency' after LHC order [P. 32]

Brick kilns sealed for violating smog SOPs [P. 32]

Lahore again tops global pollution ranking with 470 AQI [P. 32]

Karachi briefly ranked ‘most polluted’ city [P. 32]

### **10.1 # Biodiversity**

First-of-its-kind study highlights Tharparkar`s conservation needs [P. 32]

### **10.2 # Health**

WHO, Pakistan sign MoU on health sector [P. 32]

Health of four Congo virus-stricken doctors worsens [P. 32]

Surveillance increased as West Nile virus kills woman in Peshawar [P. 33]

Anti-polio campaign: 294,000 children left unvaccinated in Punjab [P. 33]

Rise in Congo fever deaths sparks fears in Sindh [P. 33]

Uniform health insurance scheme for poorest in works: minister [P. 33]

Karachi reports fourth death due to brain-eating amoeba in 18 days [P. 33]

Every 4th Pakistani is suffering from diabetes: experts [P. 33]

79pc diabetics find out about disease after complications: study [P. 34]

223 new dengue cases in Punjab [P. 34]

Six hospitals face `shutdown` after fund request denied [P. 34]

1,600 paediatric eye cancer cases reported in a single year [P. 34]

Breast cancer causes 44,000 deaths annually: Begum Alvi [P. 35]

Federal govt decides to launch Rs6.8bn health programmes [P. 35]

HIV/AIDS killed 12,000 adults, children last year in country, moot told [P. 35]

## **11 # SOCIO-ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS**

Sept debt stocks down 2.6pc to Rs62.291trn MoM [P. 35]

Over Rs2.5tr spent on subsidies, grants in last three years: minister [P. 35]

### **11.1 # Food Scarcity**

Joint initiative to address malnutrition in flood-hit areas [P. 36]

## **11.2 # Inflation**

October CPI-based inflation stays high at 26.9pc YoY [P. 36]

16pc-60pc hike in prices of various drugs witnessed [P. 36]

## **11.3 # Weekly Inflation**

Weekly inflation surges 30pc on costly food [P. 37]

Weekly inflation stays above 29pc [P. 37]

Gas price hike fuels short-term inflation to 42pc [P. 37]

Inflation stays above 40pc for second straight week [P. 37]

## **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

Pakistan needs \$340bn to meet climate challenges, says FM Akhtar [P. 37]

### **12.1 # Climate Crisis**

Irregular rains leave farmers high and dry [P. 38]

Facing melting glaciers, Hunzais fight for future [P. 38]

### **12.2 Climate Financing**

Lenders seek transparency as Pakistan pitches for environment funding [P. 39]

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

Lightning kills three in Thar as rain causes massive power breakdown [P. 40]

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

Mild quake shakes Lasbela [P. 40]

Two labourers buried alive [P. 40]

## **15 # RESISTANCE**

Metrobus security staff protests unpaid salaries [P. 40]

Protesters seek fair probe into 'suicide' of cook in Clifton house [P. 40]

Flood-hit people rally for rehabilitation [P. 41]

Wheat price hike sparks protests in GB [P. 41]

Protesters demand release of `missing` JPMC doctor [P. 41]

Families of missing persons hold protest [P. 41]

Trans community raises demand for identity at Moorat March [P. 41]

Nurses protesting for salaries told to call off strike [P. 41]

Chaman grinds to a halt amid protests [P. 42]

Protest held against police brutality [P. 42]

GB protesters want wheat subsidy restored by Nov 30 [P. 42]

### **15.1 # Resistance: Energy Sector**

Power outage protests bring traffic to standstill on Quetta highways [P. 42]

Mirpur observes complete shutter down against inflated power bills [P. 43]

Manufacturers protest gas tariff hike [P. 43]

### **15.2 # Resistance: Education Sector**

KU students protest against 30pc hike in tuition fee [P. 43]

Benazir university teachers go on strike over pay-cut, denial of promotions [P. 43]

ATA case against 150 PU students for `violent` protest [P. 43]

Mardan university employees protest demotion [P. 43]

Karakoram university students relaunch protest against fee hike, other issues [P. 44]

Students march for revival of their unions, end to harassment [P. 44]

### **15.3 # Pro-Palestinian Protests**

Students take to streets in support of Palestinian children [P. 44]

Thousands rally in two AJK towns against Israeli barbarism [P. 45]

Citizens march in solidarity with Palestine, condemn Israeli barbarism [P. 45]

# NATIONAL NEWS

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

### ***Stakeholders regret agriculture sector is 'hostage' to commission agents***

Agriculturists, economists, progressive farmers and researchers have lamented the situation where agriculture sector in Sindh is hostage to commission agents, who, instead of farmers, fix prices of farm products. They said the farm sector was not meeting needs of raw materials for textile industry so there was need to explore alternatives. One of the major reasons was that agriculture sector had failed to give desired results because industrial sector had stopped investing in it for a long time. They were speaking at inauguration ceremony of the 5th Banana Festival 2023.

SAU vice chancellor Dr Fateh Marri said that over 3.5 million tonnes of valuable banana waste was burnt every year although it could be used to produce by-products, including fiber, composite fertilisers, confectionery and cosmetics. He suggested formation of a banana research group comprising public, private and industrial sectors along with research institutes and growers, and hoped that this group could become part of World Banana Forum in future. (*Dawn, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

### ***Sino-Pak agri cooperation to help address food security challenges: minister***

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kauser Abdulla Malik has said that Sino-Pak agricultural ties and joint efforts will help address the issue of food security and to learn from each other's experiences. He addressed participants of 4th Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) Sino-Pak agricultural forum arranged by the Institute of Horticultural Science, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan said that if the agriculture sector performs, the rest of the sectors also flourish. He said that due to the last year campaign average production has gone up three mounds per acre. (*Business Recorder, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 6*)

### ***US envoy, FAO mark completion of \$1.3m farming project***

US Ambassador Donald A Blome participated in a closing event of a five-year, \$1.3 million US Embassy-funded sustainable farming programme. The Alternative Livelihoods Options Project, which was implemented by the FAO with the assistance of the KP government, has helped 3,700 farmers, including over 600 women, increase their incomes by teaching them improved agricultural practices and increasing their access to new, alternative crops. The programme's "achievements are far-reaching," said Ambassador Blome, noting that it "helped establish fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, and irrigation systems benefitting more than 25,000 people." (*Business Recorder, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)



## **1.1 # Land**

### ***Police identify 42 influential land grabbers in Dadu district***

Sindh Police has identified 42 influential individuals, including local leaders of former ruling party, local government representatives and tribal chiefs, who are found involved in encroaching upon both government and private lands across Dadu district. (*Dawn, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

## **1.2 # Water**

### ***Work on Daducha Dam to start this month***

The caretaker Punjab government is set to resume work on the construction of Daducha Dam with an escalated cost of Rs10 billion as the Small Dam Organisation of the Irrigation Department has recently sent a revised PC-1 (Project Concept-1) to the Planning and Development Department for a final approval. Providing background information, the commissioner said the land for the dam project had been acquired in 2010 and the construction work started in 2018. At the time of the start of work, it was estimated that Rs3.3b would be spent on civil works and Rs2.6 billion for acquiring more than 18,000 kanals. The project was initially to be completed by April 2023. Now work will take two years to complete, if it started by end of November. Provincial government had already spent Rs2.582b. (*Dawn, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Three key water projects face funding shortfall***

Three key water sector development projects under the Prime Minister's National Agriculture Emergency Programme and designed to increase crop yields leading to gaining self-sufficiency in food suffer a major setback as funding for these projects has been delayed. The national food security and research ministry — which sponsored these projects costing Rs194 billion and launched in 2019-2020 and due to be completed in 2024 — is now seeking a two-year extension for their completion in anticipation of approval of funds. The federal government's share for these projects had been estimated at Rs61.624bn, with provincial governments' share of Rs76.227bn and farmers' contribution of Rs56.214bn. (*Dawn, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***World Bank building 11 flood detention dams in Sindh***

The World Bank mission has said that 11 flood detention dams are being built under the irrigation department's Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (SFERP) for harvesting rainwater to recharge groundwater and turn wastelands into fertile farmland. World Bank-funded project also helped provide water for subsistence agriculture, livestock and human population and safeguard Karachi from urban flooding. They observed that the Kohistan region was a water-deficit area where life and livelihood were dependent on rainfall, which had significantly changed its pattern due to climate change. It was feared that more extreme weather patterns were going to be witnessed, such as drought and floods. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

### ***Completion of 8 water, hydropower projects to boost water storage: Wapda***

With the completion of eight under-construction water and hydropower projects of Wapda, the carry over water capacity in the country will increase from 30 days to 45 days with an addition of 9.7MAF water storage, while hydel power generation of Wapda will also be doubled to more than 18,000MW with an increase of 9,043MW. Per capita water availability in the country has declined from 5650 cubic meter in 1951 to an alarming level of 908 cubic meter per annum, pushing us to the stage of water-scarce country. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 2*)

### ***6th Karachi International Water Conference***

President Dr Arif Alvi terming water scarcity a big challenge for the climate-hit Pakistan said taking urgent steps such as nature-based solutions and developing civic sense about water conservation were need of the hour. He regarded water-related disasters including shortages as the major sign of climate emergency and emphasized taking the issue as a major preoccupation by governments, corporate organizations, and citizens, said a press release. In his video-link address to the closing session of the 6th Karachi International Water Conference, he said there was a need to bring attitudinal changes among the public by educating them to consciously use water.

Dr Alvi said a World Bank study in Pakistan showed a link between malnutrition and poor quality of water which inhibited the absorption of healthy minerals in the body. He emphasized that the climate and water emergency had exposed the underlying dysfunctions in global, national, and local economies and showed how these systems failed to produce economic, environmental, and social justice for people. He proposed developing platforms with the involvement of the communities to encourage them to follow preparedness, and resilience initiatives on water conservation. (*Business Recorder, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 7*)

## **2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

### ***Modernisation linked to better agri productivity***

National Productivity Organization (NPO), Pakistan in collaboration with Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Tokyo, Japan opened a 4-day international workshop on Improving Agricultural Productivity through Mechanization. The main aim of this workshop is to promote understanding of the latest technologies and measures for mechanization in agriculture, policies and frameworks to support mechanization on small farms. Farm mechanization is viewed as a package of technology to ensure timely field operations, increased productivity, reduced crop losses and improved quality of grain or product. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### **2.1 # Fertilizer**

#### ***Punjab farmers decry fertiliser shortages, overpricing***

Farmers and their representative organisation are complaining about either non-availability of fertilisers or overcharging by the dealers at a crucial time when the wheat,

the staple food of the country, is being sown and the government is pressing to bring the maximum area under its cultivation to ensure food security. The Punjab government has fixed the wheat sowing target for the season 2023-24 at 16 million acres to achieve a target of 25.6 million tons. Sources in the provincial Agriculture department said the target had been estimated by achieving the per acre yield of 40 maunds.

Aamer Hayat Bhandara, co-founder of Agriculture Republic & Digital Dera said wheat sowing had just started, and farmers were facing non-availability of different fertilizers, including DAP and urea on government-prescribed rates. However, he claimed that the normal urea price was Rs 4200-4500 per bag against the government-prescribed price of Rs 3600 per bag, while DAP prices were hovering around Rs 13500 per bag. Similarly, he said urea with zinc, a product of a certain company, was available at Rs 4900 to 5000 per bag. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Urea talks continue with Russia, China, Azerbaijan***

The government is reportedly engaged with Russia, China and Azerbaijan for purchase of 0.2 million tons of urea fertiliser for Rabi season as both PPRA Board and federal cabinet have cleared the proposal of Ministry of Industries and Production(MoI&P). However, ECC is yet to accord approval of the negotiated price offered by the parties which participated in urea tender. According to Additional Secretary (Incharge) Ministry of Industries & Production, Asad ur Rehman Gilani, Rabi season has started and the country was short of 200,000-MT urea fertiliser due to closure of local plants for two months. (*Business Recorder, November 20, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Farmers assured of ample inputs supply for Rabi***

Agriculture authorities have assured the farming community that ample availability of farm inputs, including seed and fertiliser, will be ensured in the open market for the ongoing Rabi season. A spokesperson for the agriculture department says that fertilisers are available in abundance to meet the needs of Rabi 2023-24 crops, especially wheat, and there is no shortage of the compost fertilisers in Punjab province. He says the supply of quality agricultural inputs, including fertilisers and seeds to farmers at fixed rates is the top priority of the government and exploitation of farmers will not be tolerated under any circumstances. To ensure the supply of fertilisers at fixed rates, departmental teams under the supervision of the agriculture secretary are active and a zero-tolerance policy is being implemented against those involved in black marketing and profiteering.

During ongoing month, FIRs have been registered against 182 dealers involved in overpricing and black marketing of fertilisers across the province and of them 92 handed over to the police, besides a sum of over Rs10.781 million has been recovered as fine. As many as 29,984 bags of fertilisers worth Rs10.08m have also been confiscated. The spokesman says aggrieved farmers may lodge their complaints to their respective area's assistant director, deputy director or director agriculture (extension) against prices of fertilisers higher than official rates. (*Dawn, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 2*)

## 2. 2 # Seed

### ***Govt tightens rules for import of GMO seeds***

The food ministry has announced that no seeds, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), would be permitted into the country without complying with the prescribed Plant Quarantine Regulations and Seed Regulations. The announcement was made by the caretaker federal minister Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik in a statement, after a meeting with the All Pakistan Solvent Extractors Association (APSEA). The APSEA asserts that chicken prices in the country are closely tied to the import of GMO soybeans, given that soybean meal is a primary component of chicken feed.

Dr Malik emphasised that seed imports would only proceed after fulfilling proper procedures and underscored the significance of encouraging the cultivation of domestic oilseed crops to make use of underutilised land, aligning with Pakistan's domestic and national priorities. Dr Malik called for a technical and commercial research report within a week regarding the potential import of GMO seeds for oil extraction and meal production. Secretary Ministry of National Food Security retired Captain Muhammad Mahmood proposed forming a committee comprising key stakeholders to study global standard operating procedures and sanitary and phytosanitary protocols for GMO soybean seed importation. The committee's objective is to mitigate biosecurity, biosafety, & food security risks associated with GMO soybean seed imports in Pakistan.

However, sources in the food ministry said that the representatives of the Climate Change Ministry were not invited to the meeting, despite the fact that the subject of GMO falls under the Environmental Protection Agency, an attached department of the Climate Change Ministry. (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Certified wheat seed production: USAID, KP agri dept join hands***

USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (ERDA) in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Agriculture Research and local farmers, is pioneering an innovative approach to certified wheat seed production in District Mardan. The project, "Enhancing Wheat Seed Production through Seed Cluster Approach," promises to bring about transformative changes in the region's wheat production capabilities, said an official of KP Agriculture Department.

Pakistan, being the 8th largest wheat producer globally and the 3rd largest in Asia, has a significant stake in agriculture, contributing 7.8 percent of the value added in the sector and 1.8 percent of the country's GDP (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021-2022). To address challenges faced by wheat sowing farmers in procuring good quality high yielding wheat seed in a sustainable manner, seed cluster approach has been adopted.

Dr. Shakeel Kakakhel, Deputy Chief of Party for USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity, highlighted the activity's significance, stating "In KP, the yield of wheat has remained low as compared to other provinces. The average yield in Punjab

and Sindh is 2.9 tons/hectare, while average yield of wheat in KP is 1.56 tons/hectare. Various factors such as lack of high yielding varieties, water shortages, and uneven pesticide and fertilizer applications cause yield to be relatively lower. Seed determines more than any other element of what result a crop can achieve.”

The annual wheat seed requirement of KP is around 30,000 tons, while only 7 percent (2,100 tons) of certified wheat seed is available to farmers according to Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department. The remaining seed comes from informal sources either farmers’ saved seed or seed obtained from fellow farmers, middlemen, or village shops, where information about the source of variety is in most cases unknown. Under the cluster approach, 250 farmers in Sawal Dher, District Mardan, will receive basic wheat seed for 250 acres of land, blended fertilizer, plant stimulant, and handholding a move aimed at strengthening the foundation of the wheat farming community in the region.

This activity will ensure that certified seed is available to local farmers of district Mardan and adjoining districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the years to come. Using certified wheat seed will guarantee an increase in yield by 15-20%, thus minimizing KP dependency on other provinces for major staple crop. These growers will receive comprehensive training in certified seed production techniques, courtesy the Agricultural Research KP and the federal Seed Certification and Registration Department. With this knowledge, they will produce high-quality seeds that meet required standards. (*Business Recorder, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### **3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT**

#### **3.1 # Cash crop**

##### ***Punjab unlikely to meet 2023-24 cotton production target***

Cotton production will remain at 6.9 million bales in Punjab during the season 2023-24 against the target of 8.2 million bales set at the start of the season. The reason for the shortfall in production is cited as a shortfall in achieving the sowing target, which was set at 5 million acres. Still, only 4.12 million acres were brought under the cultivation of this vital crop. They said the production target of 8.2 million acre was anticipated with achieving the per acre yield of 19.67 maunds. However, they said the production achieved was 20 maunds per acre thus achieving the 6.9 million bales. They attributed the healthy per acre yield to the steps taken by the provincial government and the agriculture department which include proper technical guidance and ensuring quality inputs. Last year, the production was only 3.2 million bales in the province and area under cotton cultivation was 3.6 million acres.

Meanwhile, Farooq Ahmad Bajwa, a progressive grower from Bahawalpur and convener of the Punjab Water Council (PWC), contested the figures claimed by the official sources and alleged that it would remain around 5.5 million acres to the

maximum. Talking to this scribe, he said the shortfall in the sowing and production target was a result of untimely rains. He said there was scarcity of water when it was needed while there were excessive rains when the water was not needed. He also alleged that the growers could not get hold of quality approved seeds while adulterated fertilizers and pesticides were other reasons behind shortfall in production. He said diseases faced by the cotton crop could not be controlled timely due to these adulterated inputs. He feared that it might lead in to delay in sowing and ultimately lower the production of wheat too. (*Business Recorder, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Cotton production jumps 82pc***

The data released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) showed that around 6.8 million bales arrived at the ginning factories till Oct 31 which is 82pc more on a year-on-year basis. The previous year only 3.7m bales had been registered as the crop had been damaged by floods and heavy rains in the cotton belt witnessing a 34pc YoY decline. The PCGA says that cotton arrivals rose 13.3pc during the last fortnight.

During 2023-24, the total domestic production of cotton is likely to remain between 9 and 9.5m bales, around 2m bales short of the target of 11.5m bales set by the Federal Committee on Agriculture, says Karachi Cotton Brokers Forum chairman Naseem Usman. So far textile mills have purchased 5.8m bales, over 91pc more than the previous year's 3.03m bales. Exporters and traders, including a foreign firm, have procured 0.279m bales against just 49,000 bales in the last year. The ginners are maintaining a stock of 0.713m bales. (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Experts say local cotton not meeting country's textile needs***

The Agricultural Experts, economists, progressive farmers, and researchers have said that cotton is not meeting the country's need for textile raw materials, so we must invest in alternative sources, and Agriculture is not been given satisfactory results due to non-investment by the industry for a century, while agriculture is the only sector in the country, in which the rate of commodities is set by the commission agent instead of the Farmer. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Sindh govt fixes minimum price of sugar cane at Rs425 per 40kg***

Caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh retired Justice Maqbool Baqar fixed the minimum price of sugar cane at Rs425 per 40 kg for the crop 2023-24. The decision to this effect was taken after a thorough discussion and considering the cost of production worked out by the agriculture department. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Sugar crisis brewing amid differing cane rates***

The already volatile sugar market has another time-ticking bomb under it as the crushing season is about to begin and growers from Punjab and Sindh will be selling sugarcane at different prices and distorting the national market. Sindh has announced a rate of Rs425 per maund, whereas Punjab has fixed it at Rs400 for the same quantity. If the rate differential reflects in the market, the country would have two of them. If equalised

officially, the Punjab millers will make additional money and be seen as begetters of political and fiscal favours something the country can hardly afford. The growers from Punjab have been arguing their case for Rs25 increase in cane price at every forum but have not succeeded so far. Khalid Khokhar of Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, says: `It is a huge favour to millers and equally disfavour to farmers. In practice, it means Rs20,000 per acre loss to the growers if the average yield is taken at 800 maunds. If the growers have 100 acres, it is a loss of Rs2 million. (*Dawn, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***7.3m bales of cotton reach ginning mills***

Over 7.3 million bales of seed cotton have reached ginning factories across Pakistan as of November 15, 2023, according to PCGA. Of the total cotton arrivals, over 7.0 million bales have undergone the ginning process, converting them into marketable cotton bales. The textile sector purchased 63,22,047 bales, exporters acquired 2,79,826 bales, and the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) did not make any purchases during the cotton season 2023-24. A total of 455 ginning factories were operational in the country, and there was an unsold stock of exactly 7,68,751 cotton bales available in ginning factories. (*Business Recorder, November 19, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***Farmers for increasing sugarcane support price to Rs500/maund***

Farmers have rejected the sugarcane support price of Rs400 per maund announced by the Punjab government for the crushing season 2023-24 and demanded that it should be raised to Rs500 per maund at least. The farmers said that this raise is essential in the wake of high prices of agricultural inputs like fertilizer, electricity, diesel, pesticides and labour charges. The demand was raised by Kissan Board Pakistan (KBP), further said that due to the wrong policies of the rulers, agriculture had become almost dead and the prices of agricultural inputs like electricity, fertilizers, pesticides and oil were skyrocketing. KBP warned that govt. should accept our demands otherwise farmers would protest all over the country. (*Business Recorder, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 2*)

## **3.2 # Food Crop**

### ***High wheat output yields Rs400bn benefit***

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research said that the country was able to achieve a financial benefit of Rs400 billion with the increase of 4 million tonnes of wheat production in 2022-23. This result was achieved in the wake of the national project aimed at increasing the productivity of wheat and reducing the productivity gap costing Rs30.45 billion. The federal share in the project was Rs5.6bn while the provincial governments contributed Rs12.52bn and farmers and service providers shared Rs12.29bn. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Wheat procurement: ECC directs ministry to submit action plan***

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet has directed Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) to review the whole wheat procurement system and submit it to the ECC along with action plan. These directions



were issued at a recent meeting of the ECC during discussion on a summary of MNFS&R titled “permission to import of 1.0 MMT of milling wheat for the year 2023-24 to maintain strategic reserves.” The MNFS&R informed that wheat availability for 2023-24 was estimated at 29.81 MMTs, comprising production of 28.18 MMT and public carry-forward stock of 1.63 MMTs. Bumper wheat production this season would be sufficient to cater to national consumption, however, for maintaining strategic reserves of 2 MMTs, there would be a shortfall of 2.40 MMTs for the year 2023-24.

Local wheat prices for the week ended on October 5, 2023 were reported by the PBS at Rs. 4,823/40 kgs or Rs.121/kg, whereas wheat flour prices were at Rs. 2,789/20-kg or Rs. 139/kg. Price escalation factors were hoarding, smuggling, low public stocks and delay in public stock releases to flour mills. Due to these factors, public sector (PASSCO and Provincial Food Departments) could only achieve 75% assigned target of wheat procurement, i.e., 5.97 MMTs against 7.80 MMTs assigned target. (*Business Recorder, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Country well-stocked with wheat reserves: ministry***

The country is currently well-stocked with wheat reserves as both the federal and provincial food departments have reported a total stock of 6.934 million tonnes of wheat, the national food security ministry said. These reserves are sufficient for the country’s essential needs until May 2024 when the new crop harvest reaches the market. It added that Passco has a stock of 1.78 million tonnes, Punjab 4.021m tonnes, Sindh 0.817m tonnes, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 0.227m tonnes and Balochistan 0.089m tonnes.

The private sector has initiated wheat procurement due to its confidence in the federal government’s support. Currently, more than 700,000 tonnes of wheat has been procured within the country, with expectations of an additional 1.2m tonnes to be procured. The federal government has assured full cooperation to the private sector to ensure a steady supply of wheat until the arrival of the new crop. The supply and price situation for wheat has improved and there is no shortage of the commodity in any part of the country. Wheat prices, which were previously Rs4,800 per maund a month ago, have now fallen to Rs4,300-Rs4,400. In Pakistan, the area planted with wheat crop for 2024 is forecast at a level well above the five-year average, driven by record prices, while good supplies of quality seeds, fertilisers and herbicides augur well for yields, the FAO report says. (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Govt urged to announce wheat support price***

Agriculture experts and farmers have urged the federal government to fix the minimum support price for wheat season 2023-24 as soon as possible, as it would encourage farmers to opt for this major crop. (*Business Recorder, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 7*)

### ***Flour mills reject ‘unrealistic’ wheat price***

The Pakistan Flour Mills Association rejected wheat issue price of Rs4,700 per maund announced by the food authorities the other day arguing that adding Rs800 per maund



as incidental charges to the cost of grain procured by the government at Rs3900 per maund from the farmers was too much. The wheat forcibly bought at Rs3,900 per maund is now being sold at a rate of Rs4,700 per maund by the government, demanding immediate downward revision of the rate. It said the support price of wheat was Rs4,000 per maund and the release price for flour mills has been fixed at Rs4,700 per maund. (*Dawn, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***TCP tenders to buy 110,000 metric tons of wheat***

A government agency has issued an international tender to purchase and import 110,000 metric tons of wheat, European traders said. The deadline for submission of price offers in the tender from the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) is Dec. 27. The wheat can be sourced from any optional worldwide origins apart from Israel and India and should be supplied from the latest crop. The agency reserves the right to buy 10% more or less than the tender volume. Traders said Pakistan is believed by traders to have a substantial import requirement to cool rising flour prices, but the country's financial difficulties have restrained import purchases. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***There's no wheat shortage, Senate told***

The caretaker government has claimed that 7.2 million metric tonnes of wheat stocks are currently available in the country, denying that there is any shortage of this commodity. Presently, Punjab has 3.92 million metric tonnes stocks of wheat, Sindh has 817,394 million metric tonnes, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 215,082 metric tonnes and Balochistan has 89,354 metric tonnes of wheat stocks, caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi told Senate. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 1*)

## **3.3 # Fruits**

### ***Experts propose growing exotic fruits in Gorakh Hills***

Agricultural experts and progressive farmers have proposed setting up experimental farms of grapes, pomegranate and dragon fruit in Gorakh Hills area after successful experiments of the dragon fruit production by Sindh Agriculture University. They were speaking at a seminar on "Growing Potential of Dragon Fruit in Sindh" organised by Department of Horticulture, SAU, Tandojam. (*Dawn, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

### ***Over Rs36m funds to save Kinnow from diseases***

The federal government has released Rs36.6m funds under the Export Development Fund to build a 'centre of excellence' at an estimated cost of Rs200m to protect the Kinnow crop against different diseases. Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Sajid Hussain Tarar said that on the SCCI recommendation, the federal government had signed an agreement with the University of Sargodha (UoS) for the establishment of 60 departments in its College of Agriculture.

Similarly, Rs200m will be spent on establishing a research centre aimed to get more yield by eliminating various diseases hitting the citrus fruit orchards, adding that the federal government released the first installment of Rs36.6m under agreement. Along

with conducting research on the production of disease-free and seedless Kinnow fruit, it will help to further improve its quality.

PFA: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has destroyed vegetables cultivated on 20 kanals in Bhakkar district in an operation against crops irrigated with sewage in Sargodha region. (*Dawn, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

## **4 # NON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

### **4.1 # Fisheries**

#### ***Govt asked to check illegal fishing in Balochistan***

Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch, the Chairman of Haq Do Tehreek (HDT), has called on the caretaker government to intervene and halt the ongoing marine ecological crisis in Balochistan waters and take immediate action against the trawler mafia engaged in illegal fishing. He said that following a month-long sit-in organised by HDT in Gwadar and Turbat, the previous government under Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo signed an agreement with HDT, assuring steps to address the raised issues. However, instead of resolving the concerns, law enforcement agencies allegedly attacked and subjected participants of the protest to severe torture, leading to the arrest of numerous workers and leaders. He mentioned that despite being released on bail, there are still threats of false cases to deny constitutional rights.

He highlighted that residents of Balochistan, particularly the fishermen of Makran, have been advocating for their fundamental rights for the past three years. He emphasised the government's neglect of fishermen and the restoration of border trade with Iran, crucial for the people of Makran to sustain their families. Mr Rehman demanded an immediate lifting of the ban on the crossing point to enable people to earn their livelihood. He criticised the trawler mafia in Gwadar for exploiting the rights of local fishermen, leading to unemployment among the poor. (*Dawn, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

#### ***80 Indian fishermen released from jail***

As a gesture of goodwill, the government of Pakistan released as many as 80 Indian fishermen from the District Prison Malir to send them back to India through the Wagah border in Lahore. The fishermen, detained in the jail for past three to four years for having crossed over to Pakistani waters. (*Dawn, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

#### ***Balochistan initiates fisheries policy***

The Balochistan government has established a Technical Working Group (TWG) to craft a new fisheries policy and revise the legal framework. The Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) will serve as the Convener for this initiative. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***Climate change, rising global temperature affect fisheries: expert***

Capture fisheries are on the decline in the country due to number for factors including climate change and rising global temperature regime. The impact of the Global Climate Changes is also affecting the ecosystem of Marine, Brakish water and fresh water upstream of the Indus River delta. The decline in fish catch in Marine, Brakish and fish water is impacting the fisher's income resource which are also in decline thus they have economic problems which need to be addressed according to their needs. To increase fish production only way is to support investment in the sector through coordinated efforts of the federal and provincial governments.

A positive initiative has been taken by the Ministry of Food Security, Government of Pakistan through its Fisheries Development Board that a soft intervention of development of website where will link stake holders from Farmers, Auctioneers, whole-sellers, processors and retailers on daily basis. The producers (Fish Farmers) will have update knowledge of the market price and demand of fish in national local markets.

This programme should started by providing registration to primary (fish hatcheries, fish farms) and tire two production, processing and cold chain stakeholders. Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority is planning to provide Research and Development program to support public and private sector in their endeavor to enhance trout fish production particularly in Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in near future. (*Business Recorder, November 20, 2023, Page 2*)

## **4.2 # Livestock**

### ***UAF, CAU organise Sino-Pak workshop on 'Control of Livestock Diseases'***

Strengthened Pakistan-China relations will help control livestock diseases and harness the growth potential in order to increase per animal production and solve livestock health issues. It was echoed by the experts while addressing a one-day Sino-Pak workshop on Control of major Livestock Diseases. Seminar was organized by the Department of Pathology, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, UAF, in collaboration with China Agricultural University.

Prof Dr Farzana Rizvi said that half of the agriculture in Pakistan's GDP consists of livestock. She said animals' genetic improvement will increase production. She said that the livestock sector was facing problems due to diseases, climate change and other reasons in which Pakistan-China joint efforts will help to combat. Prof Dr He Cheng said that all possible efforts are being made under the project to control diseases in livestock in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He said that livestock accounts for 11.3% of Pakistan's GDP and according to 2020 statistics, there are 211 million buffaloes, cows, camels and sheep in Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, November 19, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***SAU, livestock dept sign MoU to preserve cattle breeds***

The Sindh livestock department and the Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tando Jam have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for preservation of indigenous cattle breeds such as Sindhi Kundhi buffalo, Sindhi red cow and other breeds. The two sides agreed on the expansion of artificial insemination technology for the breeding of indigenous cattle species. According to the MoU, bulls of the Sindhi Kundhi buffalo breed would be made available across the province for the convenience of cattle farmers at the semen production units managed by the livestock and fisheries Department of the provincial government. (*The News, November 19, 2023, Page 16*)

## **4.3 # Poultry**

### ***Poultry: finding a new mean***

The extraordinary inflationary cycle of the last 18 months has irreversibly transformed pricing across many industries. Even as the market prices now begin to calm down as a result of demand suppression and loss of purchasing power, domestic demand will probably never look the same again. Take the example of the poultry industry, where general inflationary pressure – coupled with poor policy matrix – wreaked havoc on consumer demand over the last two years. Now that demand has been particularly subdued (after the record run which saw prices double in less than a year), prices have been on a downward trajectory for at least past four months. Since June 2023, national average prices have fallen approximately 32% across both wholesale and retail markets, which may be single longest continuous period of price decline in recent memory.

The recent decline in prices is most likely an outcome of a shift in demand curve, rather than an increase in output. What this means is that if the top price of ‘live’ chicken in Lahore had ranged close to Rs 325 per kg in 2021, two years later (in 2023) that’s where the lower bound lies. Despite the recent downward trend that’s lasted for more than four months, calendar year average prices for 2023 are still 80 percent higher than for 2021. The case of Day-Old Chicks is no different, where prices no longer fall below Rs60 per chick, when few years ago that would be the highest prices would ever shoot up to. Welcome to a brave new world of falling protein consumption. Where poultry meat prices are now at par with beef, and farm eggs prices at par with that of live chicken. The market may soon find its new mean, but the exuberance of past decade may not be seen again for a long time to come. (*Business Recorder, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Poultry traders go on strike against uniform rates***

Three major poultry trader organisations went on indefinite strike in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad against the uniform rates of poultry in Punjab. The distributors, wholesaler and retailers have stopped selling chicken and eggs. The poultry association of Abbottabad district and Chakwal district also announced their support for the strike and stopped the supply of chicken as a result of which the twin cities ran short of poultry items. (*Dawn, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Law to regulate poultry sector***

Punjab Livestock Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad has said that the Poultry Act will be mandatory for all poultry premises across the Punjab. He said the Pakistan Poultry Association would be soon invited to a meeting on the implementation of the act across the board as the Poultry Research Institute (PRI) would play an active role in this regard as a regulator. The minister said that the PRI would work on indigenous breeds of poultry for meat and eggs and would explore the potential of new breeds, besides strengthening private entrepreneurship in backyard poultry and developing a reliable database for poultry supply chain. (*Dawn, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

## **5 # TRADE**

### ***Govt launches web portal to promote trade***

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government launched an online government-business communication platform, GoBiz Connect, insisting that the initiative will help increase coordination and communication between government departments and business community and thus, promoting trade and commercial activities in the province. It added that the web portal would also serve as an effective tool to monitor and track government's decisions related to the resolution of business community's issues and complaints and considering the proposals of the business community in government's policy decisions regarding business. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Jul-Oct FY24: Trade deficit shrinks 34.7pc YoY***

Pakistan's trade deficit narrowed down by 34.70 percent in the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year 2023-24 as it stood at \$7.416 billion compared to \$11.356 billion during the same period of last fiscal year, says PBS. Country's exports increased by 0.66 per cent to \$9.617 billion during July-October 2023-24 compared to \$9.554 billion in the corresponding period of the last fiscal year. Imports declined by 18.54 per cent to \$17.033 billion during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared with \$20.910 billion in the same period of the last fiscal year.

On a month-on-month basis, trade deficit widened by 38.27 per cent to \$2.099 billion in October 2023 when compared to \$1.518 billion in September 2023. Exports recorded a 9.33 per cent increase to \$2.707 billion in October 2023 when compared with \$2.476 billion in September 2023. Import increased by 20.33 per cent to \$4.806 billion in October 2023 when compared with \$3.994 billion in September 2023.

The trade deficit narrowed by 4.46 per cent on a year-on-year basis and stood at \$2.099 billion compared in October 2023 compared to \$2.197 billion during the same month of last fiscal year. The imports increased by 4.91% on a YoY basis and remained \$4.806 billion in October 2023 compared to \$4.581 billion in October 2022. The exports increased by 13.55% on a YoY basis and remained \$2.707b in October 2023 compared to \$2.384b in October 2022. (*Business Recorder, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Merchandise exports grow over 13pc***

Pakistan's merchandise exports increased for the second month in a row after a year-long downward trend, data released by PBS. In absolute terms, the export proceeds were recorded at \$2.70bn in October against \$2.38bn over the corresponding month of last year, indicating a growth of 13.55pc. However, on a month-on-month basis, the export proceeds increased 9.33pc to \$2.70bn. Export of goods in the first four months of FY24 increased by 0.66pc to \$9.61bn against \$9.55bn in the corresponding period last year.

The commerce ministry reported that more than 1,600 textile units were closed down in the past 16 months. The export proceeds were declining because of internal and external factors stoking up fears about closure of industrial units, especially textile and clothing.

At the same time, the imports also rose by 4.91pc to \$4.80bn in October from \$4.58bn in the same month last year. On a month-on-month basis, the imports increased by 20.33pc. The import bill fell 18.54pc to \$17.03bn in July-October FY24 from \$20.91bn over the corresponding months last year. The imports fell 31pc to \$55.29bn in FY23 from \$80.13bn in FY22. The government has projected an import target of \$58.69bn for FY24 against \$55.29bn in FY23, an increase of \$3.4bn or 8.14pc.

The trade deficit narrowed 34.70pc to \$7.41bn in July-October FY24 from \$11.35bn over the corresponding months of last year. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Afghanistan urges Pakistan to release 'thousands of containers' from port***

Afghanistan urged Pakistan to release thousands of containers of imports it said were stuck at Karachi port since Islamabad clamped down on transnational cargo. Pakistan authorities say they have lost millions of dollars in taxes because goods are being sent duty-free from its ports to land-locked Afghanistan, and then smuggled back across the border. Afghan authorities say Pakistan has stopped more than 3,000 Afghanistan-bound containers while demanding more tax and duty payments, causing millions of dollars in losses to traders. (*Business Recorder, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***GSP review: EU identifies major challenges facing Pakistan***

The European Union (EU) has said that political turmoil, constitutional challenges, economic crisis, high inflation and serious shortage of foreign reserves are continuously affecting Pakistan. GSP+ has proven to be pivotal for EU-Pakistan bilateral trade ties. From 2014 to 2022, Pakistan's exports to the EU increased by 108% whereas imports from the EU increased by 65% and the total trade volume increased from EUR 8.3 billion in 2013 to EUR 14.85 billion. (*Business Recorder, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 202, Page 1*)

### ***Pak-Afghan cross-border trade resumes***

Cross-border trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan was back to normal after Islamabad suspended new visa rule. (*Business Recorder, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## 5.1 # Exports

### ***Rice exports fetch \$3bn this year: minister***

Punjab Agriculture Minister S.M. Tanvir claims that country has earned \$3 billion from the export of basmati and coarse rice this year. He was speaking at the centennial celebrations of Kala Shah Kaku Rice Research Institute. He said that Pakistan is the fourth rice exporting country in the world and the crop not only fulfills our nutritional needs but is also an important source of earning foreign exchange. He congratulated the institute's management on completion of 100 years of its foundation during which its scientists developed 29 varieties of paddy known for their nutritional properties and fragrance. He said there's a need to continue with the development of new paddy varieties in view of climate change and to prevent farmers from indiscriminately using pesticides on the crop. He said the growers should be given technical advice in this regard to increase rice exports. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Exports to Middle East jump over 21pc***

Exports to the Middle East bounced back with a growth of 21.38 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year from a year ago. A surge in demand for Pakistani products was observed from countries like the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan. However, the exports to Qatar decreased during the period under review. In FY23, Pakistan's exports to the Middle East fell by 12.62pc to \$2.332bn compared to \$2.669bn in the preceding year. Pakistan witnessed a 7.24pc decline in imports totalling \$17.488bn in FY23, down from \$18.853bn in the previous year. Exports to Saudi Arabia saw an increase of 29pc in the first quarter (July-September) of FY24 to \$149.27m from \$114.83m over the corresponding months of last year. In FY23, the exports jumped 13.1pc to \$503.40m from \$420.40m in the preceding fiscal year. Nearly 62pc of total exports to the region go to the UAE market alone. (*Dawn, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Trade snags will be removed, Kenyan HC tells rice exporters***

High Commissioner of Kenya Nyambura Kamau assured rice exporters of removing the bottlenecks in the promotion of trade between Pakistan and Kenya. Kenya is Pakistan's largest trading partner in Africa, while Pakistan is one of the top importers of Kenyan tea. (*Business Recorder, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Exports to Europe fall despite GSP+***

Pakistan's exports to European nations witnessed a 12.13 per cent decline in the first quarter of the current fiscal year compared to the same period last year, primarily due to a reduced demand for Pakistani goods in western and northern Europe. The export revenue from these countries fell to \$1.929 billion in July-September FY24, a noticeable drop from the \$2.212bn recorded in the corresponding months of the previous year, according to SBP. In FY23, the export of EU dropped 4.41pc to \$8.188bn from \$8.566bn in the preceding fiscal year. (*Dawn, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)



### ***73pc growth seen in rice, sesame seed exports: PBF***

Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) said Pakistan's exports increased by 13.5% in October 2023, reaching a total of \$2.7 billion and the trade deficit also decreased by 4.5% during same period. The PBF's Vice President, Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad, said that the agriculture sector grew by 73% in October, with rice and sesame seed exports increasing significantly. This shows that country's exports are diversifying and that the agricultural industry is strong. He pointed out that India's ICT exports crossed \$140b mark in FY23, doubling in past five years. In contrast, Pakistan's ICT exports peaked at \$2.6b in FY22, but have not grown since then. (*Business Recorder, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Textile exports rebound***

The textile and clothing exports bounced back in October from the previous downward trajectory, according to PBS. The sector recorded growth of 5.92pc, with exports rising to \$1.44bn, up from \$1.35bn in the same month last year. Export value of textile and clothing exports shrank 6.33pc in the first four months (July-October) FY24 to \$5.56bn from \$5.94bn in the corresponding period last year. The import of textile machinery declined by 37.63pc in October — a sign that expansion or modernisation projects were not a priority. In the first quarter of FY24, the total exports slightly increased 0.48pc to \$9.59bn this year from \$9.55bn over last year. (*Dawn, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Surging food exports hitting domestic buyers***

The export of raw food products recorded an upsurge of almost 60 per cent in October compelling domestic consumers to pay higher prices. These unchecked exports pushed food inflation to a staggering 29pc in Oct as prices skyrocketed affecting accessibility to essential commodities, particularly wheat flour, rice, sugar, meat and vegetables.

Food exports grew 30.29 per cent in the first four months of fiscal year 2023-24 to \$1.944 billion from \$1.492bn over the corresponding months of last year, according to PBS. The surge in food exports can be attributed to unprecedented rupee depreciation. Due to sustained surge in export figures over past two years, average price of basmati rice has surged Rs350 per kg from Rs150, restricting buying from domestic consumers.

Pakistan exported \$152.58m worth of meat in 4MFY24 from \$128.46m over last year, showing a growth of 18.77pc. The reason for the increase in meat exports is the introduction of new markets like Jordan, Egypt, and Uzbekistan. Prices of meat in the domestic market have experienced an unparalleled surge in recent years. In two years, the average price of buffalo meat has jumped from Rs700 per kg to Rs1,200 per kg. Price of chicken has also surge, reaching its highest level in the last two years.

During the period spanning from February to August, the sugar export figures reached an impressive 248,854 tonnes against no exports recorded over the comparable period of last year. ECC imposed an export ban from Aug 10. This decision came amidst a surge in the retail price of sugar, reaching an unprecedented high of Rs200 per kg.



Export of fruits saw an increase of 13.53pc in first four months to \$108.99m against \$96.003m over last year. Export of all other food products saw an increase of 13.88pc to \$404.52m in 4MFY24 from \$355.22m over the corresponding months of last year. Pakistan exported fish and fish products worth \$123.86m in first four months of FY24, decline of 7.96pc from a year ago of \$134.57m. (*Dawn, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Govt rejects millers` demand to allow sugar export***

In an unprecedented move to prevent a potential surge in local retail prices, the Sugar Advisory Board rejected a proposal from sugar millers seeking permission for export. The millers have sought approval to export 500,000 tonnes of sugar before the commencement of the sugarcane crushing season. (*Dawn, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 202, Page 9*)

### ***US extends exemption related to fish exports***

Pakistan has successfully secured a two-year extension until Dec 31, 2025 to continue the commercial export of fish and fish products to the United States. This decision by the US administration exempts Pakistan from adhering to the standards outlined in the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 2016. Pakistan stands among a select few of the 130 countries that have been granted this special exemption. The exemption was originally scheduled to end on Dec 31 this year. However, it has now been extended to offer additional time for countries to align their fishing practices with these (US) environmental standards. (*Dawn, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 202, Page 9*)

### ***Regional exports grow 14pc***

Driven by higher shipments to China, the exports to nine regional countries witnessed a year-on-year growth of 14.3 per cent during the first four months of the current fiscal year, showed data released by SBP. The country's exports to Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives rose to \$1.443 billion in July-October from \$1.263bn in the corresponding period last year. In FY23, exports to these regional countries dipped 21.1pc to \$3.331bn over the preceding year. Almost 61 per cent of Pakistan's regional exports were destined for China and the rest to the remaining eight countries.

Exports to China increased 40.36pc to \$952.22m in July-October FY24 from \$678.38m over the corresponding months of last year. In FY23, the exports to China declined 27.3pc to \$2.02bn from \$2.78bn in FY22. It was the first decrease in the post-Covid period. Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan grew 2.64pc to \$128.53m in July-Oct FY24 from \$176.02m in the same months last year. No exports were made to Iran on the official channel in the first four months of the current fiscal year. The country's exports to India declined 37pc to \$0.069m in 4MFY24 from \$0.110m in the corresponding months last year. Exports to Bangladesh decreased 34.74pc to \$192.19m from \$294.49m in July-October 2022. Exports to Sri Lanka increased by 2.68pc to \$114.47m in 4MFY24 from \$111.48m in the same period last year. Exports to Nepal increased

year-on-year by 11.76pc to \$1.14m in 4MFY24. Shipments to the Maldives increased by 17.49pc to \$3.09m from \$2.63m. (*Dawn, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 9*)

### ***Record cotton exports likely this season***

Pakistan has exported at least 125,000 cotton bales this season and the quantum is set to improve further during the current crop season. The cotton consignments are being destined for China, Vietnam and Indonesia and a significant point is that all these export deals have been clinched by only one cotton ginner from Sindh, Dr. Jasso Mal. Cotton exports could not enter six digits since 2017-18 when the exports stood at 207,424 bales. The country exported just 4,900 bales in 2022-23, 16,000 bales in 2021-22 and 70,200 bales in 2020-21. (*Dawn, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

## **5.2 # Import**

### ***Deals on import of over 1.3MMTs of wheat sealed***

Pakistani traders have finalized deals for the import of over 1.3 million metric tons of wheat to meet the domestic demand and stabilize the commodity prices. Out of this quantity, some 0.6 million tons of wheat imported by the private sector has reached Pakistan, importers said. As the country is facing a shortage of wheat grains, the government has allowed import of wheat by the private sector without any subsidy. (*Business Recorder, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Govt decides to import urea on G2G basis***

The federal government has reportedly decided to import 0.2 million tons of urea on G2G basis preferably from China and quiz local urea manufactures on inflated prices across the country. On October 23, 2023, the ECC was informed that the Ministry of Industries and Production submitted a summary to the ECC for extension in operations of SNGPL-based fertilizer plants beyond October 15, 2023 to March 31, 2024 for import of 200,000 MT of urea and provision of maximum gas volume/ pressure to Fauji Fertilizer Bin Qasim (FFBL). The summary was considered by the ECC in its meeting of October 3, 2023; however, it was still awaiting decision/ ratification by the Cabinet. ECC also agreed for import of 200,000 MT of urea through TCP to meet its requirement during current Rabi season. (*Business Recorder, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Import of urea exempted from PPRA Rules***

The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) is said to have exempted procurement of 0.2 million tons of urea from abroad from applicability of relevant PPRA Rules. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***'Private sector is in the field' There's no plan to import wheat thru TCP: official***

The federal government has no plan to import wheat through Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) as the private sector is importing wheat to meet the domestic demand. Secretary NFS&R also said that Regulatory Duty (RD) will not be imposed on the import of wheat by the private sector. Secretary NFS&R said that so far the government

has no plan to give subsidy or import wheat through the state-run grain trader, i.e. TCP as the private sector is already importing sufficient wheat without any subsidy.

Private sector has estimated import of about 3 million tons of wheat for domestic consumption as the country is facing some shortage of the commodity. He said so far some 0.7 million tons of imported wheat imported by the private sector has arrived in Pakistan, while import of almost the same quantity is in pipeline and expected to reach Pakistan by end of December. (*Business Recorder, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***ECC decides to explore option of import through G2G arrangement***

ECC of the Cabinet has decided that the option of import of 200 KMTs fertiliser through government-to-government arrangement be explored in the first instance for the Rabi season. (*Business Recorder, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Pakistan`s wheat import needs will decline: FAO***

FAO has forecast that Pakistan`s wheat import requirements would decline significantly in the coming year. In 2023-24, wheat import requirements is forecast to be the level of 1.8 million tonnes, but would decline significantly from the high quantity of wheat imported between 2020-21 and 2022-23. (*Dawn, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Petroleum group imports register negative growth of 16.93pc***

Petroleum group imports witnessed a negative growth of 16.93 percent during the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year and stood at \$5.029 billion when compared to \$6.054 billion during the same period of last fiscal year, PBS said. Data revealed that petroleum group imports increased by 28.54 percent on a year-on-year (YoY) basis and stood at \$1.527 billion in October 2023 when compared to \$1.188b during October 2022. On a month-on-month basis, it registered 14.76% growth when compared to \$1.330m in Sept 2023. (*Business Recorder, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***ECC allows urea imports***

ECC of the cabinet decided to import 220,000 tonnes of urea from Azerbaijan on a government-to-government (G2G) basis, allowed Rs754 billion cash credit limits (CCL) to Punjab and Sindh for procurement of essential commodities and approved a further increase in gas price from January. (*Dawn, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Deferred payment basis: \$400m petroleum products imported during Jul-Oct***

Pakistan imported petroleum products worth \$400 million on a deferred payment basis under the Saudi oil facility during July-October of the current FY 2023-24 against the budgeted estimates of \$600 million. (*Business Recorder, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## **6 # CORPORATE SECTOR**

### ***Notice to foreign firm in Rs650m damages suit***

A civil court issued a notice to a Japanese company on Rs650m damages suit filed by a local rice manufacturer and exporter. Plaintiff Rice World alleges that Satake

Corporation misrepresented the quality of some of the machinery it provided, claiming it to be faulty. Company is globally recognized for its expertise in manufacturing and supplying machinery and equipment for various food products with a specialization in rice milling and processing machinery. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

***Urea for Rabi season: Gas supply to Fatima, Agritech plants will continue: ECC***  
ECC of the Cabinet has decided that uninterrupted gas supply will continue for Fatima Fertilizer and Agritech plants to ensure sufficient supply of urea fertilizer for Rabi season 2023-24. (*Business Recorder, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

***Factory sealed for making counterfeit fertiliser***

A factory was sealed in area of Karak district other day for making counterfeit fertiliser. Police, local administration, and staff of agriculture department of Karak took the action on the information of an intelligence agency. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

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

***Pakistan third top recipient of Chinese finance: study***

Pakistan is the third biggest recipient of Chinese development finance worldwide with a portfolio of \$70.3 billion, according to a report released by AidData, a US-based international development research lab. Only two per cent of China's portfolio in Pakistan between 2000 and 2021 consisted of grants while the rest was in the form of loans, says the AidData report that claims to have drawn its conclusions using data from more than 5,300 sources. The average interest rate on loans was 3.72pc with an average maturity period of 9.84 years and a grace period of 3.74 years. The top sector that received development finance in 2000-2021 was energy with a share of 40pc or \$28.4bn. General budget support (30pc share or \$21.3bn) and transport and storage (14pc share or \$9.7bn) were next two major recipients of Chinese financing.

The energy portfolio of \$28.4bn was the biggest in the world, with Angola (\$24.7bn) and Vietnam (\$21.7bn) following as the second and third biggest recipients of Chinese development finance over the same period. Pakistan's energy portfolio represented 10.2pc of China's entire global energy portfolio across dozens of countries. Since 2012, China has been Pakistan's single-largest foreign development financing provider, outpacing the United States by 1.6 times in 2013, 7.7 times in 2016 and 22.4 times in 2021. Data showed 82pc of the projects committed until 2021 were "completed" with another 13pc remaining "under implementation". Out of 47 projects worth more than \$500m, the majority were in general budget support (21), followed by energy (15) and banking and financial services (six).

With a total of 161 loans worth \$68.9bn, Pakistan constituted China's third largest country-level loan portfolio anywhere in the world, after Russia and Venezuela, report claims. At \$28.13bn, rescue lending to Pakistan originating in China was the highest in

world, followed by Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela. This points to the “particularly close all-weather friendship between the two countries”.

Pakistan’s public debt exposure to China is \$67.2bn, which is 19.6pc of GDP. “Since 2017, larger proportions of Chinese development finance are for rescue loans, rather than developmental projects, which was the hallmark of CPEC in its heyday (2014-2017) when fresh commitments were forthcoming in large values,” said the report.

The post-2017 years also saw roll-overs become more common and either matched or exceeded new loan commitments since 2019. Out of 127 infrastructure projects worth \$38.8bn, only three projects worth \$452m have been suspended or cancelled thus far, data showed. More than half (52pc) of the infrastructure project portfolio has faced some Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risks. The energy sector has faced the greatest ESG risks with 51pc of the portfolio facing one or more of these challenges.

Only a quarter of these projects have strong ESG safeguards in place, as per AidData’s classification. As opposed to only 16pc and 19pc for environmental and governance risks, respectively, as many as 46pc of these projects faced social risks such as labour violations or community protests. (*Dawn, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Flood-hit districts: USAID contributes for agri revitalization***

The USAID’s Economic Recovery and Development Activity (USAID-ERDA) has made remarkable contributions for revitalizing agriculture in the flood-affected districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and Peshawar. In 2022, devastating floods brought havoc upon Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leaving a profound impact on the region. A total of 17% of cultivable land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was severely damaged. Notably, in Dera Ismail Khan, three out of seven seed farms, responsible for 10% of the province’s annual seed production, faced dire circumstances, posing a significant threat to seed availability and the livelihoods of 300 farmers.

USAID-ERDA successfully rehabilitated 488 acres of land and repaired nine flood-damaged watercourses with total length of 3.3km in government seed farms in Dera Ismail Khan. These initiatives enhanced irrigation efficiency and productivity of land. Additionally, USAID-ERDA, rehabilitated 18 flood-damaged soil & water conservation structures in various villages of district Dera Ismail Khan to protect land from sliding and erosion, and enhance groundwater recharge and storage of rainwater for irrigation in a water scarce area.

The impact is already evident, with paddy cultivated and harvested on 33 acres and wheat seed cultivation underway on the remaining 345 acres. This intervention will not only restore agriculture but also enhance the livelihoods of farmers, providing hope for those who have endured adversity. The USAID-ERDA is also engaged in rehabilitation of 158 flood-damaged watercourses, a significant initiative that is expected to be completed by June 2024. This rehabilitation is vital for ensuring proper water

management in the affected areas, which is essential for agriculture and the local ecosystem. (*Business Recorder, November 20, 2023, Page 4*)

***Pakistan, Kuwait to seal \$10bn investment deal***

Pakistan and Kuwait will soon sign seven MoUs for investments worth \$10 billion in Pakistan through seven projects in multiple fields, including environment, mining, and food security. Consequent to the efforts by SIFC, both countries would sign MoUs on multiple projects, including the expansion of water reservoirs, mining facilities, conservation of mangrove forests and IT. (*Dawn, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 12*)

***SIFC approves initiatives to be broached with friendly countries***

A special session of Apex Committee of SIFC has unanimously approved various initiatives to be broached with friendly countries and directed to fast-track implementation under initiatives. (*Business Recorder, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 1*)

***Pakistan, UAE ink MoUs in multiple fields***

Pakistan and UAE signed multibillion dollars MoUs in Abu Dhabi in a range of areas to boost economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders & COAS witnessed signing of MoUs pertaining to investment & cooperation in sectors of energy, port operations, wastewater treatment, food security, logistics, minerals, and banking and financial services under SIFC. (*Dawn, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 12*)

***Saudi govt extends \$3bn deposit for another year: SBP***

Saudi Arabia has rolled over the \$3 billion deposit facility for another year to support SBP foreign exchange reserves which may fall to below \$4bn in case the amount is withdrawn. On Sept 4, Mr Kakar said Pakistan's untapped mineral deposits are conservatively valued at about \$6 trillion. Pakistan is trying to bring Saudi and UAE investment for Reko Diq which has a large amount of gold, copper and other minerals. (*Dawn, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

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

***Multiple financing sources: Jul-Oct borrowing down \$0.408m to \$3.847bn YoY:***

***EAD***

The country borrowed \$3.847 billion from multiple financing sources during the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year 2023-24 compared to \$4.255 billion borrowed during the same period of 2022-23, revealed EAD data. The Country received \$318.10 million in October 2023 compared to \$2.017 billion in October 2022.

Government has budgeted \$2.4 billion from IMF for FY2023-24 and received \$1.2b as first tranche of the \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) in July 2023, however, the EAD data does not reflect it. Further, there is no mention of \$1 billion disbursed by the UAE. If the IMF and UAE inflows are added, the total inflows would reach \$6.047 billion during the first four months of the current fiscal year. The \$3.847 billion included \$2 billion received from Saudi Arabia under the head of time deposit during July 2023.

The data further shows that the government had budgeted estimates of \$4.5 billion from the foreign commercial banks for the current fiscal year 2023-24, however, no money was received under this head during the first four months of the current fiscal year. The government had budgeted \$1.5 billion from the issuance of bonds, however, the country is yet to issue the bonds, hence no amount is received so far. The government had budgeted \$17.619 billion from multiple financing sources for the current fiscal year including \$17.384 billion loans and \$234.60 million grants.

The country borrowed \$10.844 billion from multiple financing sources including \$2.206 billion from foreign commercial banks during the fiscal year 2022-23 against the budgeted foreign assistance of \$22.817 billion. However, the \$10.844 billion did not include the rollover of friendly countries' deposits amounting to \$6 billion (i.e. \$3 billion each from China and Saudi Arabia), and re-financing of Chinese loan of \$1.3b.

The country received \$306.26 million under the head of "Naya Pakistan Certificate" during the first four months of the current fiscal year 2023-24. The country received \$597.49 million from multilaterals and \$435.61 million from bilateral during July-October 2023-24. The non-project aid was \$2.855 billion including \$2.355 billion for budgetary support and project aid was \$992.55 million.

China disbursed \$508.34 million under the head guaranteed for the JF-17 B project funded by China National Aero-technology Import and Export Corporation (CATIC). China further disbursed 0.35 million in July-October against the government budgeted of \$18.54 million for the current fiscal year. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) disbursed \$87.50 million during the period under review compared to the budgeted \$2.086 billion for the fiscal year 2023-24. Saudi Arabia disbursed \$400 million against the budgeted \$600 million under the head of oil facility during July-October 2023-24. USA disbursed \$15.10 million in the first four months against the budgeted \$21.60m for fiscal year. Korea disbursed \$5.39m and France \$7.49m during current fiscal year.

The IDA disbursed \$303.43 million in July-October against the budgeted \$1.489 billion for the current fiscal year and IBRD \$67.28 million against the budgeted \$840.36 million. IsDB (Short-term) disbursed \$100 million in July-October against the budgeted \$500 million for the current fiscal year and AIIB disbursed \$27.86 million, while IFAD disbursed \$11.41 million against the budgeted \$42.68 million for the current fiscal year. (*Business Recorder, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## **8.1 # Asian Development Bank**

### ***ADB okays \$250m for power networks***

ADB announced that it had approved \$250 million in loans to Pakistan for improving its power transmission network in Punjab and KP to ensure reliable electricity supply for sustainable economic growth. (*Dawn, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)



### ***Faults found in foreign-funded power projects***

A Senate panel found fault with the procurement of foreign multilateral-funded projects in the power sector and ordered the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (Nespak) not to sign a final agreement with a local firm till a conclusion because of suspicious circumstances. A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Power presided over by Saifullah Abro took up the matter of Nespak on non-implementation of its orders regarding the submission of a re-evaluation report and status for ADB funded project regarding ACSR Bunting Conductor. (*Dawn, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 9*)

### ***ADB gives \$180m for water, waste management***

ADB announced that it had approved a \$180 million loan to improve water supply and solid waste management services in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur. Loan was expected to benefit about 1.5 million people through Developing Resilient Environments and Advancing Municipal Services in Punjab and help curtail excessive groundwater extraction and urban environment degradation by expanding and modernising urban water supply in Rawalpindi and solid waste management systems in Bahawalpur. (*Dawn, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

## **8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

### ***IMF contacts key partners directly over fund pledges***

With policy-level discussions boiling down primarily to external financing gap, the visiting staff mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has started direct communications with key bilateral partners to confirm their committed support to Pakistan, including rollovers and additional flows, during the current fiscal year. In background discussions, officials said there appeared to be no major challenge as far as the successful completion of the first quarterly review was concerned and that about \$710 million second tranche of \$3 billion Standby Arrangement (SBA) would hopefully be disbursed in the first part of December with the approval of the Fund's executive board, although there were questions here and there. However, the mission flagged its concerns about risks to the financing pipeline of about \$28bn external needs during the current fiscal year. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***IMF raises questions on SIFC creation***

IMF has advised Pakistan against creating a group of preferred investors or distortions in the country under SIFC and to ensure transparency and accountability in its business deals. Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Dr. Jehanzeb Khan told economists and journalists that visiting fund mission had raised questions as to the need for creation of another institution like SIFC and whether this would lead to the distressed sale of assets and advised against preferred investors. They want “transparency and accountability should be above board” in these matters. (*Dawn, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)



### ***Success in IMF review set to unlock \$700m***

IMF reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the first review of a short-term loan deal, which will unlock about \$700 million next month. The funds to be issued are a second tranche of the nine-month bailout package and are subject to approval from the IMF's executive board. This will bring total disbursements under the \$3 billion package, approved in July, to almost \$1.9bn. The lender said inflation was expected to decline over the coming months amid receding supply constraints and modest demand. "However, Pakistan remains susceptible to significant external risks, including the intensification of geopolitical tensions, resurgent commodity prices, and the further tightening in global financial conditions". It appreciated that authorities in Pakistan were determined to achieve a primary surplus of at least 0.4pc of GDP during this fiscal year, underpinned by federal and provincial government spending restraints and improved revenue performance supported, if necessary, by contingent measures. (*Dawn, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***IMF conditions suppress growth: Industry Leaders***

Extending a cautious welcome to the Staff-Level Agreement, the business community believes that the time has come to generate more resources to boost trade and industry instead of approaching IMF again in April next year. Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said the business community stood by the government to surpass its revenue generation target despite all odds — and, above all, the unbearable cost of doing business in the wake of higher electricity, gas and petroleum prices. He questioned why the economic team of the government has still not been able to secure other sources of cheaper external financing from multilateral sources and international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

Due to the lack of institutional arrangements with IFIs, Pakistan will continue to rely on bilateral loans from friendly countries to complete the current IMF programme – while the country's preference should have been investment, trade and industrial collaboration with friendly countries. He urged the government to tighten its regulatory oversight now over the speculative trading of dollars by commercial banks as the interbank market has shown depreciation of rupee over the last 17 sessions consecutively. He supported the proposed 40pc tax on the windfall profits of the commercial banks for 2021 and 2022. (*Dawn, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Govt urged to revive five-year development planning***

IMF has advised Pakistan to revive its five-year development planning, get climate-sensitive public investment management plans working and publish criteria for project appraisals for transparency to attract global climate financing. The IMF's guidance comes immediately after the two sides reached a staff-level agreement on the first review

of a \$3 billion bailout, followed by a public announcement by caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar to postpone a conventional \$1.5bn Eurobond issue this year and the potential need for a longer-term IMF loan deal soon after the February elections.

The authorities plan to follow the tight fiscal and monetary policies as committed with the IMF under the ongoing loan deal and build foreign exchange reserves for better credit rating and subsequent launch of a green bond called Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) bond. Because of the repeated natural disasters, international donors also appear fatigued to spare scarce resources of their taxpayers unless climate-resilient and adaptation measures are in place. The IMF has found faults with Pakistan's decision to skip five-year plans in 2018 after the 11th such plan and advised the government to revive medium- and long-term planning in which climate-sensitive investments become part of public investments. (*Dawn, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

#### ***IMF board to approve SLA on Dec 7***

The Executive Board of IMF is tentatively scheduled for Dec 7 to approve SLA with Pakistan for first review of \$3bn Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) leading to disbursement of about \$700m on Dec 8. The IMF staff and the Pakistani authorities reached the SLA on Nov 15 in Islamabad. This will enable Pakistan to have access to SDR 528m (around \$700m). This will bring total disbursements under the nine-month \$3bn SBA to almost \$1.9bn. Finance Minister announced shelving a \$1.5bn Eurobond launch because of adverse global financial conditions and committed to keep regularly adjusting electricity & gas rates to avoid further flow of circular debt. (*Dawn, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

#### ***Next budget must adapt to climate change demands, IMF tells Pakistan***

As Pakistan seeks continuous and extended international support at the global climate conference (COP28) in Dubai this week, IMF has told government that the budget for FY2024-25 should practically be a turning point for the planning mechanism and investment portfolios based on climate adaptation. The IMF asked the ministries of finance and planning "to improve transparency by presenting in budget documentation summary information on key aspects of PSDP and wider public investment programme" due to insufficient information on implications of climate-related actions on the budget. (*Dawn, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 1*)

### **8.3 # World Bank**

#### ***World Bank commits to strengthening BISP***

World Bank has reiterated its commitment to support BISP social protection system in order to strengthen and financially empower the marginalised segments of society and ensure relief to the poorest of the poor. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

#### ***IFC unveils \$1.5bn investment plan for Pakistan***

The Board of Investment and the World Bank affiliate International Finance Corporation (IFC) unveiled a visionary investment plan, for which the IFC committed

to inject over \$1.5 billion into Pakistan`s economy in the form of short and long-term investments aimed at catapulting the country into a new era of prosperity and development. The pledge follows the IFC`s successful mobilisation of \$1.5bn FY23, marking a significant doubling of investments in Pakistan compared to the previous year. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***WB approves restructuring of \$380m PFM programme***

The World Bank (WB) has approved the restructuring of the financing agreement of the Public Financial Management (PFM) and Accountability for Service Delivery Programme worth \$380 million. (*Business Recorder, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***PD team testifies before Senate panel***

The Power Division testified before a panel of Senate that World Bank has started probe into \$300m contract of 765 kV double circuit transmission line project on the complaint of Turkish firm, SA-RA Energy, whose team recently visited the site of the project to verify facts. World Bank had approved financing of \$700m for two lots of the project, which are under construction. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 1*)

### ***World Bank urges Pakistan to look at big picture***

The World Bank cautioned Pakistan against short-term measures like domestic debt restructuring and attracting one-time investment through a new civil-military initiative, without addressing the country`s ‘big picture issues’ through reforms aimed at improving larger business climate, taxation and human capital. The “creation of a new institution is no quick fix” to bring investment without improving the taxation system, competitive market conditions and state-owned entities, Martin Raiser, the World Bank`s regional vice president for South Asia, said at a news conference.

He said the government`s objective in creating SIFC might be good and such steps could help once or twice, but it was no solution to Pakistan`s challenges, which could only be addressed by improving the business climate, providing a level playing field and removing distortions and tax exemptions. Earlier, IMF had also advised the government against creating a group of preferred investors and suggested transparency and accountability should be above board. (*Dawn, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***More hike in power tariffs opposed: WB to extend \$2bn loan in FY24***

The World Bank while pushing for a policy shift for sustainable and viable power reforms, has opposed the idea of further increasing the power tariff, saying that the authorities need to reduce line losses and improve recovery. World Bank`s Regional Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser said that during the ongoing financial year the WB is to disburse around \$2 billion in Pakistan. While commenting on the idea of writing off internal debts, he objected and said one-time writing off loans does not mean core problems will be resolved forever as they will re-emerge. He said that deferment of local loans may affect banking sector & investment, so Pakistan has to be careful in process of deferment of local loans. (*Business Recorder, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***WB points out 6 major challenges facing economy***

The World Bank while pointing out six major challenges facing Pakistan's economy has launched a series of policy notes that outline critical policy shifts required for a productive, sustainable, resilient, and healthy Pakistan. Addressing an event jointly organised by the WB and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics here, the World Bank's Regional Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser, said that Pakistan's economy is facing difficult situations, floods, and climate change. The policy notes—focusing on child stunting fiscal sustainability, private sector growth, energy, learning poverty, agriculture, and climate change—are the culmination of several months of outreach and engagements conducted across the country under the “Reforms for a Brighter Future – Time to Decide” banner.

Talking about possible reforms for Pakistan's bright future, the report said that, there is a lack of investment and exports due to inconsistency in policies, while Pakistan's agricultural sector is unproductive and stagnant. According to the World Bank, there are six major problems facing Pakistan, including a human capital crisis. It says that the underutilization of available human resources is affecting the country's productivity and growth. Moreover, 40 per cent of children under five years of age suffer from stunting. Pakistan has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world, at over 20 million, adding that 79 per cent of children under 10 years of age are unable to read or understand text. The report further says Pakistan faces a very high fiscal deficit. The fiscal deficit reached its 22-year high of 7.9 per cent at the end of the fiscal year 2022, it adds. Pakistan's outstanding debt has been found at a record high of 78 per cent above the legal limit. (*Business Recorder, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## **9 # POLICY**

### **9.1 # Developmental Policy**

#### ***CDWP okays nine projects to attract international investment***

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) cleared nine development projects worth about Rs224 billion in various sectors, mainly aimed at bringing in much-needed international financial assistance from multilateral and bilateral lenders that had been delayed inordinately because of slow progress on project preparation despite pledges made at Geneva conference more than a year ago. Chaired by Planning Commission's Deputy Chairman Dr Jehanzeb Khan, the CDWP meeting approved five small projects valued at Rs10.02bn and recommended four larger projects worth Rs213.86bn to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) for approval. The projects taken up for consideration by the CDWP spanned various sectors, including food and agriculture, education, energy, physical planning and housing, science and technology, social welfare, transport and communication, and water resources.

The CDWP cleared a project in the food and agriculture sector, namely 'Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Security Support Project', on technical grounds and recommended

it to Ecneec at the cost estimated cost of Rs24.64bn (\$88 million). The project is to be fully funded by the Asian Development Bank (\$83m) and Japan (\$5m) without any share from the provincial government.

The CDWP also referred the ‘Sindh School Rehabilitation Project’ to Ecneec. The Rs83.19bn (\$300m) project is also part of the Geneva pledges made by the ADB that would bear about 90pc, or Rs75.6bn, of the cost with a \$270m lending. The remaining 10pc cost worth about Rs7.56bn would be borne by the Sindh government. The project will cover 17 districts of the province, help rebuild completely and partially damaged schools and upgrade 62 primary schools to the secondary, middle and higher secondary levels by building new blocks.

The meeting also examined another ADB-funded project involving over \$100m lending to the federal government and recommended its approval by Ecneec. The project, titled ‘Women Inclusive Finance Development Programme’ and estimated to cost Rs31.41bn, aims to support women entrepreneurs across the country. The Ministry of Finance is designated as the executing agency for this funding, proposed to come from foreign sources, specifically the ADB.

The CDWP also cleared another mega water sector project for Sindh and requested its speedy approval by the Ecneec to materialise ADB’s funding after loan approval by the executive board. The Rs74.62bn would help improve Sindh’s barrages.

CDWP also approved five development schemes that fell under its approval ceiling. It approved the ‘Rehabilitation of Schools in Balochistan Affected by Flooding’ project with a total cost of Rs1.4bn. The CDWP also approved the Rs3.1bn first phase of a project called ‘Permanent Settlement of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) Refugees 1989 Onwards’.

Another project for Azad Kashmir was also approved at the cost of Rs1.622bn to improve the Noseri Leswa Bypass Road covering 52km in Muzaffarabad and Neelum districts. Similarly, a revised project to build a 54km road from Nagor Sharif to Suntsar was also approved with a total estimated cost of Rs2.4bn. The CDWP also approved another project to establish a Pak-Korea testing laboratory for PV modules and allied equipment with an estimated cost of Rs1.505bn. (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***\$3bn projects approved for flood-hit areas***

Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has said that it approved 21 development projects costing US\$3 billion for flood-affected areas after securing maximum pledges committed in Geneva for 2022 flood. The Ministry added that in January this year, Pakistan was made commitments of \$10b from donors during the International Conference on “Climate Resilient Pakistan”, jointly hosted by Pakistan and the UN in Geneva. Capacity issues hinder uplift projects in flood-hit areas: Foreign states, donors ready to finance \$7.4b (*Business Recorder, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Rs300.9bn authorised for projects under PSDP***

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has authorised Rs300.9b (31.67%), including Rs26.3 billion foreign exchange component, in July to October 2023-24 against Rs950 billion total budgeted allocation for development projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). The ministry authorised Rs239.31b (36.4%) including 12.694b foreign aid for development projects of various federal ministries, divisions and other departments against Rs653.2 billion budgeted allocation for the financial year 2023-24. There are a total of Rs76 billion expenditures on development projects from July-October 2023 against Rs300.9 billion authorisation. (*Business Recorder, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## **9.2 # Neo-Liberal Policies**

### ***Caretaker govt tells Senate: PIA sell-off plan still there in line with IMF deal***

The caretaker government informed Senate that the plan to privatise the loss-making national flag carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), is still there besides outsourcing its airport operations in line with an International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal. The caretaker minister for information and broadcasting Murtaza Solangi while responding to a calling attention notice in Senate said that “PIA is still present on the privatization list”. He said that the previous government of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had devised a privatization plan and the caretaker government is implementing it. (*Business Recorder, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***HBFC sell-off process to be completed by Dec 15th***

The Privatisation Commission has decided to complete privatisation process of House Building Finance Company Limited by 15th December 2023. It was agreed that efforts would be made to complete all necessary work by 15th December 2023 in consultation with the financial advisor and secretary Privatisation Commission. The HBFC has issued a total portfolio of Rs18bn with 14,000 active borrowers. It presently covers only 0.03 percent market share with manifold growth potential considering even the regional countries like India and Bangladesh. (*Business Recorder, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## **10 # ENVIRONMENT**

### ***Another day of thick smog as AQI touches 439 mark***

The residents of Lahore woke up to yet another day of thick smog, as the city continued to maintain its unfortunate position as the world’s most polluted city with hazardous air quality. Lahore recorded an alarming Air Quality Index (AQI) of 439. The situation remained grim throughout day, with the AQI hovering at 325. It’s important to note that an AQI below 50 is considered safe for breathing. (*Dawn, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Punjab govt imposes ‘smog emergency’ after LHC order***

The Punjab caretaker government has imposed a ‘smog emergency’ in the province following the Lahore High Court’s direction to take immediate measures to control hazardous air quality. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Brick kilns sealed for violating smog SOPs***

Two brick kilns were sealed in Pakpattan for violating the Standard Operating Procedures issued for smog mitigation. Pakpattan Deputy Commissioner Sadia Mahar on her visit to these sites charged the brick kiln owners with Rs 300,000 each and directed the local environment departments to be vigilant in light of increasing pollution and smog. (*Dawn, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Lahore again tops global pollution ranking with 470 AQI***

The provincial capital again topped the global pollution ranking with an unhealthy air quality level during the whole day. According to the IQAir, Lahore’s air quality was the worst in the world, with the air quality index (AQI) at a “hazardous” 470, followed by Delhi at 302 and Karachi at 204. (*Dawn, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Karachi briefly ranked ‘most polluted’ city***

The city of Karachi became the ‘most polluted’ city in the world in terms of air quality on the Air Quality Index according to IQAir. (*Dawn, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

## **10.1 # Biodiversity**

### ***First-of-its-kind study highlights Tharparkar’s conservation needs***

First-of-its-kind flora and fauna study showed that Sindh’s Tharparkar region hosts 149 species of plants, 205 of birds, 41 of mammals, 31 of reptiles, and 1,065 invertebrate & amphibian species. It found three birds & one plant species to be critically endangered, two birds and one plant species to be endangered, six birds vulnerable, & 10 birds, one mammal & one reptile to be near-threatened. (*Dawn, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

## **10.2 # Health**

### ***WHO, Pakistan sign MoU on health sector***

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar witnessed MoU signing ceremony between Pakistan and WHO for cooperation in Pakistan’s health sector. WHO in Pakistan is supporting us in providing medical equipment, ambulances and mobile units, labour rooms and improving primary and secondary health facilities. WHO had more than 450 centres in remote areas. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Health of four Congo virus-stricken doctors worsens***

The fight against the Congo virus has intensified in Karachi as the health of four physicians, including a female doctor in urgent need of platelets. The medics were shifted from Balochistan to a private hospital in Karachi for specialised treatment. The development came after the provincial government enforced a health emergency across



all hospitals as the Congo outbreak affected dozens of people in Quetta only, claiming two lives. Out of 275 individuals suspected of carrying the virus, 73 have been confirmed. (*Dawn, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***Surveillance increased as West Nile virus kills woman in Peshawar***

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department has increased West Nile virus surveillance after the death of a woman from the mosquito-borne disease in a Peshawar village. The 80-year-old was the first case of West Nile virus in the province. The death from the infection prompted doctors to call for the establishment of isolation units at medical teaching institutions. (*Dawn, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Anti-polio campaign: 294,000 children left unvaccinated in Punjab***

The Punjab government has left 294,000 children unvaccinated across the province during the last month anti-polio drive, posing a serious threat to the health of the kids living in the surroundings of the ‘still missed children’. Punjab was to access 22.5m target population of under 5-year children. (*Dawn, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Rise in Congo fever deaths sparks fears in Sindh***

Frequent deaths of patients from Congo fever has set alarm bells ringing in the power corridors of Sindh as provincial authorities ordered intensified monitoring of people’s movement between districts bordering Balochistan and Sindh. Balochistan has been experiencing a Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) outbreak and many patients are under treatment at Karachi hospitals. Three mortalities from Congo fever have been reported in the metropolis this week. Last two years have seen a significantly high number of CCHF infections and mortalities in Balochistan, as 21 deaths recorded last year and 20 mortalities this year so far. (*Dawn, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Uniform health insurance scheme for poorest in works: minister***

Caretaker federal minister for national health services Dr. Nadeem Jan said “We [government] are working on a plan to start a health insurance programme for the poorest people, who make up 20% of the country’s population. Health insurance for the entire population isn’t sustainable”. (*Dawn, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Karachi reports fourth death due to brain-eating amoeba in 18 days***

The Sindh health department reported a fourth death in less than three weeks from *Naegleria fowleri* — a deadly warm water pathogen that could easily be killed with the help of proper chlorination in water. The death toll from the infection this year has reached 12 in the city, second within a week. (*Dawn, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Every 4th Pakistani is suffering from diabetes: experts***

Postgraduate Medical Institute & Ameeruddin Medical College Principal Prof. Muhammad Al-Fareed Zafar has disclosed that every 4th person in Pakistan is suffering from diabetes which causes eye problems, heart and kidney diseases. He further said that diabetes is the mother of all diseases that gives birth to countless diseases, pregnant



women are not immune from its deadly diseases and the effects of sugar on people who are already in poor health are very deadly. The people should avoid fast food, chicken products, sweets and cold drinks and ensure exercise a routine in life. Medical experts said that more than 33 million people in Pakistan are suffering from diabetes. (*Business Recorder, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***79pc diabetics find out about disease after complications: study***

More than three-quarters of people living with diabetes in Pakistan, or around 79 per cent, only find out they have the chronic disease after developing complications, says a global study released by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) on the eve of the World Diabetes Day. According to experts, currently more than 33 million people are living with diabetes in Pakistan, home to the highest number of adult population affected by the chronic disease in the world. Under the study, IDF researchers collected data from people living with diabetes across Africa, Asia, Europe and South America to understand the level of awareness and impact of diabetes-related complications.

The survey reveals that almost all (97%) of those surveyed in Pakistan had experienced one or more diabetes complications, with over a quarter (26%) having experienced heart disease as one of them. Unfortunately, despite the prevalence of diabetes-related complications in Pakistan, over a third (34 per cent) of those living with diabetes in the country didn't receive information about complications at the point of diagnosis. The most common complications experienced in Pakistan were foot (55%), eye (57 per cent), and oral health (53 per cent) problems. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***223 new dengue cases in Punjab***

Punjab reported 223 new dengue cases during the last 24 hours, taking the total number to 12,268 this year so far. (*Dawn, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Six hospitals face `shutdown` after fund request denied***

All five public sector hospitals in the federal capital and Lahore's Shaikh Zayed Hospital may be staring at a virtual standstill after the Finance Division rejected a request by the federal health ministry to provide a supplementary Rs11 billion for the smooth functioning of these hospitals. Salaries for a number of employees have already been stopped, and nurses at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) have been protesting for over a week now. The Finance Division has informed the health ministry in writing that, as per the preconditions of IMF, funds can only be released in case of a disaster. (*Dawn, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***1,600 paediatric eye cancer cases reported in a single year***

Al-Shifa Eye Trust hospital documented 1,600 incidences of paediatric eye cancer in a single year. Almost 30 percent of eye cancer patients are children. (*Dawn, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Breast cancer causes 44,000 deaths annually: Begum Alvi***

First Lady Begum Samina Alvi said that nearly 44,000 women died of breast cancer every year in Pakistan due to late diagnosis and stressed that thousands of women and their families could be saved if it was diagnosed at an earlier stage with chances of survival up to 98 percent. (*Business Recorder, November 20, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***Federal govt decides to launch Rs6.8bn health programmes***

The federal government in consultation with the federating units has decided to launch National Diabetes, Hepatitis and National Health Support Programs costing Rs6.8 billion in view of the high prevalence of non-communicable diseases in the country. Participants of the meeting also agreed to launch a National Hepatitis Programme at the cost of Rs35.4 billion under which free screening, diagnoses and treatment facilities will be provided across the country. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

### ***HIV/AIDS killed 12,000 adults, children last year in country, moot told***

Experts referred to UNAIDS data that showed the number of people with HIV/AIDS in Pakistan had increased from 75,000 in 2010 to 270,000 in 2022. The mortalities recorded in 2010 were 2,000 and it had risen to 12,000 in 2022. Referring to UNAIDS data, they said that the number of cases among women had risen from 9,000 to 49,000 and from 830 to 6,700 among children. In India, data showed, new infections per year had reduced from 120,000 in 2010 to 66,000. (*Dawn, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

## **11 # SOCIO-ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS**

### ***Sept debt stocks down 2.6pc to Rs62.291trn MoM***

The federal government's total debt (domestic and external) stocks recorded a decline of 2.6 percent in September 2023 compared to August 2023. Analysts said this is the highest decline since Jan 2011. After touching an all-time high level of Rs 64 trillion at the end of August 2023, the federal government's total debt stocks witnessed a downward trend and fell sharply by Rs 1.7 trillion in September 2023. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported that the central government's total domestic and external debt stocks fell to Rs 62.291 trillion at the end of September 2023 compared to a historic level of Rs 63.9 trillion at the end of August 2023. Analysts at Arif Habib Limited said that the massive decline in the central government debt is primarily due to Pak Rupee appreciation against the US dollar. (*Business Recorder, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Over Rs2.5tr spent on subsidies, grants in last three years: minister***

Caretaker Privatisation Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad said from 2018-21, government spent Rs2.54 trillion under the heads of subsidies, grants and loans to keep commercial SOEs operational, while the size of the government increased by more than three times in the last couple of decades. Speaking at the third 'Pakistan Prosperity Forum' organised by Policy Research Institute of Market Economy, Mr Fawad said taxation system of Pakistan not only incentivised people to stay out of the tax system but also contributed to de-corporatisation in the country. (*Dawn, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 4*)

## **11.1 # Food Scarcity**

### ***Joint initiative to address malnutrition in flood-hit areas***

The World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations and the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives decided to launch a joint initiative to address issues related to malnutrition in children and emergency response for the people affected by the devastating 2022 floods. Both the WFP country director and the planning minister expressed their commitment to working together to address these pressing issues and to ensure a positive impact on food security, malnutrition, and emergency response in Pakistan. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

## **11.2 # Inflation**

### ***October CPI-based inflation stays high at 26.9pc YoY***

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation increased to 26.9 per cent on a year-on-year basis in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 31.4 per cent in the previous month and 26.6 per cent in October 2022, says PBS. The average CPI remained at 28.48 per cent during July-October 2023 compared to 25.48 per cent during the same period of last fiscal year. On a month-on-month basis, it increased to 1.1 per cent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 2.0 per cent in the previous month and an increase of 4.7 per cent in October 2022. Pakistan's headline inflation reading clocks in at 26.9% in October.

The Sensitive Price Index (SPI) inflation on YoY basis increased to 34.2 per cent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 32.0 per cent a month earlier and 24.0 per cent in October 2022. On a MoM basis, it increased by 0.2 per cent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 1.7 per cent a month earlier and a decrease of 1.5 per cent in October 2022.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on a YoY basis increased to 24.6 per cent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 26.4 per cent a month earlier and an increase of 32.6 per cent in October 2022. On a MoM basis, it decreased by 1.9 per cent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 3.1 per cent a month earlier and a decrease of 0.5 per cent in the corresponding month of last year i.e. October 2022. The National Consumer Price Index for October 2023 is increased to 1.08 per cent over September 2023 and increased to 26.89 per cent over corresponding month of the last year i.e. October 2022. (*Business Recorder, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***16pc-60pc hike in prices of various drugs witnessed***

The prices of various medicines have witnessed an increase of 16 percent to 60 percent in the market. The current increase in various medicine prices is in addition to the permission of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) which on May 19, 2023, allowed pharmaceutical companies to increase 14 percent price for life-saving drugs and 20 percent in other drugs. (*Business Recorder, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

## 11.3 # Weekly Inflation

### ***Weekly inflation surges 30pc on costly food***

Short-term inflation surged 29.88 per cent year on year in the week ending on Nov 2 primarily due to increasing prices of kitchen products. Measured by the Sensitive Price Index, the weekly inflation also increased 0.71pc on a week-on-week basis. The rupee's depreciation, rising petrol prices, sales tax, gas bills and electricity bills are among the key contributors to this inflationary trend. (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Weekly inflation stays above 29pc***

The short-term inflation remained elevated, marking a 29.86 per cent year-on-year increase in the week ending on Nov 9 mainly due to the rising cost of essential kitchen items. Measured by the Sensitive Price Index (SPI), the weekly inflation also increased by 0.73pc on a week-on-week basis. (*Dawn, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

### ***Gas price hike fuels short-term inflation to 42pc***

A massive increase in gas prices drove the annual short-term inflation to above 40 per cent for the first time in over four months. The inflation reading stood at 41.9pc for the week ending Nov 16, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said, mainly because of over 1,100pc increase in gas charges compared to a year ago. The short-term inflation, measured by a basket of goods and services called the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), also saw a massive increase compared to the previous week, rocketing to 10pc in the Nov 11-16 week from just 0.73pc a week ago. From Nov 1, the caretaker government notified a substantial hike of 194pc in natural gas prices. In addition, consumers will also witness an unprecedented surge in fixed monthly gas charges, up to 3,900pc for protected and non-protected consumers. (*Dawn, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Inflation stays above 40pc for second straight week***

Annual short-term inflation remained above 40 per cent for the second week in a row, mainly driven by a massive increase in gas prices. The inflation reading was 41.13pc for the week ending Nov 23, PBS said, as gas prices stood over 1,100pc higher than a year ago. The short-term, or weekly, inflation is measured by a basket of goods and services called the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), which currently stands at 308.90 compared to 309.09 in preceding week. (*Dawn, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 1*)

## 12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

### ***Pakistan needs \$340bn to meet climate challenges, says FM Akhtar***

Caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar said Pakistan is facing a trade-off between raising climate finance and development finance. "I think we need to be conscious that getting money is a big issue that we face in addressing the climate agenda," she said, noting that seeking money for climate finance undercuts other development finance requirements. The country needs an estimated investment of \$340 billion to address climate and development challenges between 2023 and 2030. The

amount is equivalent to 10 per cent of the cumulative GDP during the same period, even though the country is responsible for less than 1pc of the world’s planet-warming gases.

The total cost of implementing Pakistan’s nationally determined contribution (NDC) — which is a self-defined national climate pledge under the Paris Agreement reflecting what Islamabad will do to help meet the global climate goals — is projected to be nearly \$200bn by 2030. Currently, only \$39bn in public finance and \$9bn through public-private partnerships is expected for both climate mitigation and adaptation efforts over the coming decade. Pakistan has been classified as one of the countries vulnerable to climate change. At the same time, it is classified as a debt-distressed country because its marginal cost of borrowing is at a “very high rate” with almost 75pc of revenues being used for paying for loans and interest. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

## **12.1 # Climate Crisis**

### ***Irregular rains leave farmers high and dry***

A study released by the United Nations Environment Programme in November attributed these changes to climate change. It said climate change has “elevated surface temperatures”, in turn, having strong effects on traditional weather patterns, particularly monsoon rains. It said that the main drivers of climate change are greenhouse gasses released from the burning of fossil fuels which “act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun’s heat and raising temperatures”.

Islamabad-based climate change expert Imran Khalid particularly blamed the use of fossil fuels in energy, transport, industries and agriculture for the emission of greenhouse gases (mainly carbon dioxide and methane). Due to these emissions the average global temperature since the start of the industrial age has already risen by 1.2 degrees Celcius and is likely to rise by 1.5 degrees Celcius in the mid-2030s. Average temperature in Pakistan continues to rise. As the ADB stated in its Pakistan climate profile published in 2017: “By the end of this century, the annual mean temperature in Pakistan is expected to rise by 3°C to 5°C...” (*Dawn, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

### ***Facing melting glaciers, Hunzais fight for future***

On the steep slope of a glacier jutting through the Hunza valley, Tariq Jamil measures the ice’s movement and snaps photos. Later, he creates a report that includes data from sensors and another camera installed near the Shisper glacier to update his village an hour’s hike downstream. The 51-year-old’s mission: mobilise his community of 200 families in Hassanabad to fight for a future for their village and way of life, increasingly under threat from unstable lakes formed by melting glacier ice. After all the sensors are installed, village representatives will be able to monitor data through their mobiles.

Hassanabad is part of the UN backed Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) II project to help communities downstream of melting glaciers adapt. When glacial lakes overflow or their banks become unsound, they burst, sparking deadly floods that wash out bridges

and buildings and wipe out fertile land throughout the Hindu Kush, Karakoram, and Himalayan mountain ranges. Himalayan glaciers are on track to lose up to 75 per cent of their ice by the century's end due to global warming, according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

Amid a shortfall in funding for those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, village residents say they urgently need increased support to adapt to threats of glacial lake floods. Over the past three years, residents repeatedly evacuated just in time to avoid loss of life, and many fear a flood while they sleep. Others struggle financially as their land and homes were destroyed, most recently in 2022. The \$36.96m GLOF II employs village speakers for warnings. (*Dawn, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

## **12.2 # Climate Financing**

### ***Lenders seek transparency as Pakistan pitches for environment funding***

Amid struggling project implementation and calls for more transparency by multilateral and bilateral lenders, the caretaker government made a pitch for additional international financial support, particularly those relating to 'debt for nature and debt for social development swaps' to help Pakistan meet climate finance targets. The appeal for additional financial support was made by Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar at back-to-back engagements with lenders and development partners ahead of upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP-28) convened by UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from Nov 30 to Dec 12 in Dubai.

The minister has already shelved budget plans to launch conventional Eurobond citing adverse global financial market conditions and announced to make efforts for access to climate financing, including through relevant bonds like Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), once credit rating improves following disbursement from IMF of \$700 million second tranche of the \$3bn programme, also to be dovetailed by other multilaterals. Both the IMF and the World Bank have been calling for above-board transparency and accountability in matters of foreign-funded projects, even those under the special-purpose vehicles like CPEC and SIFC.

During meetings, representatives from WB, EU, ADB, IDB, USAID, UNDP, Germany, Japan, WFP, IFAD, and others "pledged continued support to the government of Pakistan and acknowledged the importance of transparency, alignment with government priorities, and the need for timely disbursement of committed support", the statement said and congratulated successful IMF review. Other development partners that attended the meeting also included Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Agence Francaise Development, KfW and United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef). The project delays were noted as major source of concern. More than half of \$6.7bn World Bank-funded projects had been found either problematic or unsatisfactory, and the situation with ADB-funded projects was no different. (*Dawn, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 202, Page 9*)

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

### ***Lightning kills three in Thar as rain causes massive power breakdown***

Lightning killed three men and about 300 cattle heads in different parts of Thar during first showers of winter, which also caused a major power breakdown in Hyderabad city and all the areas under the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company. Members of civil society demanded that government must come to rescue of people hit by lightning and try to prevent the damage by conducting a technical survey on the incidents and damage caused by lightning in a large numbers in Thar. (*Dawn, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 15*)

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

### ***Mild quake shakes Lasbela***

An earthquake measuring 3.4 on the Richter scale jolted Lasbela and its adjoining areas in Balochistan province. No loss of life and property was reported from any part of Lasbela. (*Business Recorder, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***Two labourers buried alive***

Two labourers were buried alive and another was injured critically when they came under a mudslide during work on the lining of K-4 project in Kohistan area. Witnesses said that the labourers were unloading pipes when a loose part of earth in the large trench dug up for laying the pipes fell upon them. (*Dawn, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

## **15 # RESISTANCE**

### ***Metrobus security staff protests unpaid salaries***

The security staff of the metrobus service in Lahore staged a protest, causing a temporary halt in service due to unpaid salaries for the past three months. Up to 700 employees participated in the protest at Kalma Chowk. They said they had not received their salaries for three months and were facing threats of potential job termination from the company. This financial crisis had left them unable to meet their daily household expenses. On intervention of Provincial Transport Minister, PMA Secretary said the track had been restored, and the contractor responsible for the delayed salaries had been directed to make the payments to the employees. (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Protesters seek fair probe into 'suicide' of cook in Clifton house***

Members of the Hindu community held a protest demonstration outside the Karachi Press Club against the recent mysterious death of a 23-year-old man who worked as a cook at the Clifton bungalow of a businessman. They said that Maro Meghwar did not commit suicide and urged caretaker chief minister and Sindh police chief to hold an impartial inquiry into incident and arrest culprit involved in his 'murder'. The protesters alleged that businessman used to beat him. (*Dawn, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)



### ***Flood-hit people rally for rehabilitation***

Several hundred people rendered homeless in the last year's unprecedented rains and flood took out a rally in Johi town against government's failure to get their houses rebuilt and water, power, drainage and road infrastructure rehabilitated in Dadu and Jamshoro districts almost one year on. Protesters hailed from Dadu, Khairpur Nathan Shah, Johi, Mehar, Sehwan and other talukas. (*Dawn, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

### ***Wheat price hike sparks protests in GB***

People protested in various areas of Gilgit-Baltistan against the government's decision to increase the prices of subsidised wheat in the region. Lawyers observed a strike and boycotted court proceedings across the region against the decision in response to the call from the GB high court bar association and district bar association, while opposition members in the GB Assembly had already announced plans for a protest. The GB government recently announced an increase in the subsidised wheat rate from Rs20 per kg to Rs52 per kg, targeting subsidised wheat to poor people only. Earlier in June, the rate was raised from Rs7.5 to Rs20, leading to numerous protest demonstrations in GB. (*Dawn, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

### ***Protesters demand release of `missing` JPMC doctor***

Young doctors staged a protest demonstration outside the Karachi Press Club against alleged enforced disappearance of their fellow doctor. They said that around one dozen persons, some of them in police uniforms, took away Dr Ismail, who works at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), from his residence. Dr Ismail originally hails from Balochistan. (*Dawn, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Families of missing persons hold protest***

The Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), rejecting the committee on missing persons headed by caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti, staged a demonstration in front of the Press Club. The protest was led by Nasarullah Baloch and Mama Qadeer.

Separately, Young Doctors Association president, Dr Kaleemullah, while addressing a press conference, warned of boycotting services in government hospitals if the missing Dr Ismail was not recovered within 72 hours. He said disappearance was `extreme and beyond comprehension`. (*Dawn, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***Trans community raises demand for identity at Moorat March***

The second Sindh Moorat March brought many transgender people from the city and all over the province, including Sukkur, Larkana and Hyderabad. The programme commenced after observing two minutes of silence in support of people of Palestine. (*Dawn, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Nurses protesting for salaries told to call off strike***

Nurses at Pims, who have been on strike since November 6 against the non-payment of their salaries for the past four months, have been told by the hospital's executive director



to call off protest to facilitate patients. Spokesperson claimed that due to strike by the nurses, Pims ED has planned to procure the services of nurses from private institutions, for which MoUs had been signed as well. (*Dawn, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Chaman grinds to a halt amid protests***

Trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan via the Chaman border crossing ground to a halt as participants of a month-long sit-in being held against the strict visa regime introduced by Pakistan blocked the highway leading to Kandahar. Protesters blocked the highway in Chaman which partially suspended the transit trade and other imports and exports. Hundreds of protestors have put barricades and hurdles at the road leading towards Friendship Gate, refusing to allow any vehicle loaded with goods to cross. The trade between remained suspended for seven hours, but it resumed after a meeting between the two sides. The Afghan drivers subsequently were allowed to enter Pakistan without passports. (*Dawn, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Protest held against police brutality***

A large number of people staged a protest demonstration at Sukkur Civil Hospital against police officials of C-Section police station accusing them of causing the death of a father of three children. They alleged that the police officials had beaten Majid to death. (*Dawn, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 202, Page 15*)

### ***GB protesters want wheat subsidy restored by Nov 30***

Protesters continued to rally against the recent hike in wheat prices and other issues across Gilgit-Baltistan, demanding the government fully restore the subsidy by the end of this month. Demonstrations were held on the call of the Awami Action Committee, an alliance of political, regional and religious parties, in various areas of the GB's 10 districts. Members from various political groups, civil society organisations, trade unions, and transport & tourism sectors participated in the demonstrations, chanting slogans against both GB & federal governments. (*Dawn, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 5*)

## **15.1 # Resistance: Energy Sector**

### ***Power outage protests bring traffic to standstill on Quetta highways***

A widespread strike by landowners to protest power outages disrupted traffic on the highways that link Balochistan to other regions. The protesters staged blockades on multiple key locations, including Lak Pass, Dasht, Kolpur, Yarrow, Syed Hameed Cross, Khanozai, Kila Saifullah Bazar, Loralai-D.I. Khan Road, Zhob Road, Ziarat Bazar, Nushki, Sabi, Taftan RCD, Kharan, Mangochar, Saurab, and Saryab Mill. The strike, organised by the Zamindar Action Committee against power outages by the Qesco supply company, effectively severed Balochistan's connections with other provinces. The Quetta-Karachi Highway remained closed during the strike, and blockades were also set up on the Quetta-Chaman, Quetta-Kila Saifullah, and Quetta-Sibbi highways. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

### ***Mirpur observes complete shutter down against inflated power bills***

A shutter-down and wheel-jam strike was observed in district of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as part of an ongoing protest campaign by the civil society for abolition of “sky-high power tariff” as well as settlement of some other unresolved issues of public concern. (*Dawn, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Manufacturers protest gas tariff hike***

Fearing a large-scale industry shutdowns and subsequent layoffs, Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association (PHMA) has decided to launch a protest drive against the massive increase in the industrial gas tariff. (*Dawn, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 9*)

## **15.2 # Resistance: Education Sector**

### ***KU students protest against 30pc hike in tuition fee***

Students at Karachi University (KU) held a protest on the campus against the academic council’s recent decision to increase tuition fee by 30 per cent. It might be recalled that KU academic council in its meeting held on Oct 17 approved a massive 30 per cent increase in student fee. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 14*)

### ***Benazir university teachers go on strike over pay-cut, denial of promotions***

Members of the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University Teachers Association observed two-hour token strike and staged a sit-in at Chandka Medical College in protest against university’s failure to accept their demands including raise, promotion and time-scale. Protesters said that instead of granting two-month ad hoc relief allowance, university had cut their salaries. (*Dawn, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 15*)

### ***ATA case against 150 PU students for ‘violent’ protest***

The Garden Town police lodged an anti-terrorism case against 150 students of the Punjab University for holding a ‘violent’ protest. Lodged on the complaint of police inspector Mohammad Nadeem, it was alleged in the FIR that over 150 students of the university gathered at Barkat Market and blocked both sides of road for traffic the other day. They allegedly turned violent and attacked police which was discharging security duties at the spot. The inspector alleged that the students snatched weapons, tortured the police personnel and dragged them on the roads. (*Dawn, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 2*)

### ***Mardan university employees protest demotion***

The All Employees Association of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, continued its strike for the third day as the members held a protest sit-in outside the office of the vice-chancellor against their ‘demotions’. The employees announced to continue their protest when Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali is scheduled to visit the varsity to attend its convocation. The protesters’ leaders rejected the ‘scale cutting’ move by the syndicate for 700 university employees and demanded a pay raise for staff members. They also resented the decision to transfer 350 employees from the university’s main campus to Timergara campus, and demanded immediate withdrawal. They demanded

an inquiry by the FIA and anti-corruption establishment into the alleged Rs980-million corruption in the university during the last three years. On the other hand, the varsity administration has banned the entry of protesting employees into the university on occasion of the governor's visit. (*Dawn, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Karakoram university students relaunch protest against fee hike, other issues***

The students of Karakoram International University (KIU) staged a protest sit-in outside the campus blocking roads against fee hike, administrative mismanagement and other issues. The students announced that they would continue their protest till fulfillment of their demands. The protest call was given by the All-Students Alliance, KIU. They said the university administration had been increasing the semester fees against Higher Education Commission (HEC)'s policy. The federal and GB governments provide billions of rupees to the university annually, but they were not being used for providing facilities on the campus. The protesters said mismanagement and financial irregularities at the university had put thousands of students' future at stake. The protesters said 11 students of the university had been suspended and expelled after registration of an FIR against them for raising the issues of the university. The government had promised to provide Rs300 million grant for the university to decrease the semester fees. Protesters said after over one month, the government couldn't fulfil its promise, forcing the students to start the protest again. When contacted, Mr Zabiullah told that a cheque for Rs50 million of the promised Rs200 million grant had been handed over to the university officials. He said the university will issue a notification decreasing semester fees soon. (*Dawn, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 4*)

### ***Students march for revival of their unions, end to harassment***

Hundreds of students marched from Nasser Bagh to the Punjab Assembly, demanding revival of student unions in all educational institutions of the country. The march organised by the Progressive Students Collective (PSC). Male and female students from different educational institutes of the city, participating in the march, were carrying placards and banners inscribed with slogans demanding revival of student unions, end to harassment of girl students on campuses, formation of the anti-harassment committees, student's representations in the committees and decision-making bodies of the campuses, the recovery of abducted students and the provision of clean water and other facilities on campuses. The PSC has been organising the 'Student Solidarity March' in Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Jamshoro, Islamabad, Quetta, Peshawar, Gilgit and Kashmir for many years with these demands. (*Dawn, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 2*)

## **15. 3 # Pro-Palestinian Protests**

### ***Students take to streets in support of Palestinian children***

A large number of students, mostly schoolchildren, marched on Shahrah-i-Quaideen to express solidarity with Palestinian children as more than 4,000 of them had lost their

lives in Gaza due to ruthless Israeli bombing. The children were also carrying artworks highlighting Israeli brutalities. Meanwhile, scores of journalists marched from the Karachi Press Club to Governor House, condemning Israeli atrocities in Gaza in which dozens of journalists had been killed in a month long bombing. They also called for a UN commission to investigate the killings of journalists covering the war-hit area. (*Dawn, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Thousands rally in two AJK towns against Israeli barbarism***

Thousands of people, mostly students, took out rallies in two towns of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to condemn the mass killings of innocent and unarmed Palestinians in Gaza by Israel. The show in Rawalakot, district headquarters of Poonch, was impressive as its participants included thousands of young boys and girl students from state-run and private educational institutions, who were wearing their respective uniforms. Some girls had put on robes, abayas and headgears, imprinted with Palestinian flags. They were holding flags of Azad Kashmir and Palestine as well as large banners and placards depicting and condemning the latest spell of terrorism unleashed by the Zionists in Gaza since early last month and expressing solidarity with the victim population. (*Dawn, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 4*)

### ***Citizens march in solidarity with Palestine, condemn Israeli barbarism***

Although the call was for 3.30pm, the organisers of the Palestine Solidarity March, from Shahrah-i-Quaideen to the Quaid's mausoleum, were present at the starting point since Wednesday morning. Volunteers inside a small tent there were busy inserting thin bamboo up the base of Palestine flags before the other people arrived. Sahar Masood Ali had reached there from Nazimabad. "I'm a second semester student at the Urdu University. I was glad to have no classes today as it allowed me to come here and help," the young lady smiled while assembling the flags. The tent had lots of flags by then, the big ones to drape, the medium-sized ones attached to the bamboos, the small ones to attach to cars and motorcycles along with banners and placards and those painful posters and paintings of Palestinian children, some crying, some surrounded by rubble and gazing into space, mothers holding their dead babies to their heart, mothers burying them. There was also a choice of the black and white or red and white chequered Palestinian Keffiyeh or scarves. (*Dawn, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

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

## 2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

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## 3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

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## 4 # NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

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

## 5 # TRADE

Iran urges Muslim states to halt trade with Israel [P. 46]

### 5.1 # Exports

India signs deals to export 500,000 tons of basmati rice [P. 46]

## 6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Bayer ordered to pay \$1.56bn in latest US trial loss [P. 46]

## 7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN

US lends \$553m for deep-sea terminal in Sri Lanka [P. 47]

## 8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

IMF board approves move to boost lending resources [P. 47]

## 9 # POLICY

Tough talks expected as nations mull over steps to contain plastic [P. 48]

Negotiations start in Nairobi over global plastics treaty [P. 49]

## 10 # ENVIRONMENT

Haze lingers in Beijing as fog blankets parts of north China [P. 49]

## **10.1 # Health**

UN sounds warning on health threat posed by climate change [P. 50]

Working under sun linked to skin cancer deaths [P. 50]

## **11 # SOCIO-ECONOMICAL CONDITION**

High debt, rising costs limit innovation in developing economies: UN report [P. 51]

UN push for financial system reform to help poorest countries [P. 51]

### **11.1 # Food**

UN says food system adds \$10 trillion in hidden costs [P. 51]

One billion children exposed to acute water stress: Unicef [P. 52]

South Asia worst in world for water scarcity: UN [P. 52]

40pc of conventional baby food contains toxic pesticides: US study [P. 53]

### **11.2 # Food Scarcity**

27m children driven to hunger by extreme weather worldwide` [P. 53]

## **11. # Poverty**

Poverty soars in conflict-hit Gaza, West Bank: UN [P. 54]

## **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

Lives, uplift gains lost due to climate crisis: UN [P. 54]

WB poised to host loss & damage fund, despite concerns [P. 55]

Just 4pc of top cos meet climate target guidelines: study [P. 55]

EU pledges `substantial` contribution to COP28 climate damage fund [P. 55]

Every industry should be held responsible on climate: COP28 president [P. 56]

Heat, disease, air pollution: how climate change impacts health [P. 56]

Climate change already reducing global GDP: report [P. 57]

### **12.1 # Carbon Emission**

2022 saw record greenhouse emissions: WMO [P. 57]

UAE plans to pump CO<sub>2</sub> into rock in bid to target emissions [P. 57]

## **12.2 # Climate Crisis**

Earth to warm up to catastrophic 2.9 degrees Celsius: UN [P. 58]

World`s largest iceberg breaks free, drifts past Antarctica`s northern tip [P. 58]

Climate crisis: `children are paying the highest price` [P. 58]

## **12.3 # Climate Financing**

Rich nations `likely` met \$100bn climate finance goal: OECD [P. 59]

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

This year set to be warmest in 125,000 years, say scientists [P. 59]

### **13.1 # Flood**

Floods kill over 20, displace thousands in Ethiopia [P. 59]

Somalia floods kill 30, displace 500,000 people [P. 59]

70 perish in Kenya flood emergency [P. 59]

Lightning strikes in Gujarat kill 24 [P. 60]

### **13.2 # Storm**

Six die as storm lashes Europe with furious winds [P. 60]

Storm claims 15 lives in Western Europe [P. 60]

Deadly storm cuts power to nearly 2m people in Russia, Ukraine [P. 60]

### **13.3 # Wildfires**

Three dead after plane crashes in Australia bushfire [P. 60]

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

Rescuers struggle to find survivors as quake kills over 150 in Nepal [P. 60]

Thousands evacuated as Iceland braces for volcanic eruption [P. 60]

## **15 # RESISTANCE**

Violent BD protests shut hundreds of garment factories [P. 61]

Bangladesh garment workers clash with police as factories reopen [P. 61]

BD police clash with 25,000 protesting garment workers [P. 61]

Hundreds of activists demand plastic action in Kenya [P. 61]

### **15.1 # Pro-Palestinian Protests**

Thousands attend London pro-Palestinian rally [P. 62]

Thousands protest across Iran against US, Israel [P. 62]

Turkish police tear gas pro-Palestinian protesters at air base [P. 62]

300,000 attend London`s pro-Palestinian rally [P. 62]

Paris protesters call for end to Gaza massacre [P. 62]

Thousands march in UK for full ceasefire in Gaza [P. 62]

Trade union opposes sending nurses, workers to Israel [P. 62]



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

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## 5 # TRADE

### ***Iran urges Muslim states to halt trade with Israel***

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei urged Muslim countries to halt trade with Israel, including oil exports, in response to its bombardment of Gaza. Khamenei lambasted Western governments who "stood against Palestine", naming Britain, France & the US. US announced a new round of sanctions targeting Hamas's funding networks and sources of support in Iran. (*Business Recorder, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### 5.1 # Exports

#### ***India signs deals to export 500,000 tons of basmati rice***

India has signed contracts to export about 500,000 metric tons of new season basmati rice to cash in on robust demand from top buyers in Europe and the Middle East, traders said. India annually exports more than 4 million tons of basmati - a premium long-grain variety famed for its aroma - to Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States, among others. Europe is another big market for the rice. After imposing a ban on non-basmati white rice exports in June to stabilize domestic prices, India set a floor price, or minimum export price (MEP), of \$1,200 a ton for overseas sales of basmati in August. However, as the floor price hampered exports of the premium variety and saddled farmers with large stocks of new-season rice, the government last month cut the floor price for basmati exports to \$950 per ton. Trade came to a standstill after the August decision, but the lowering of the floor price has breathed new life into basmati rice trade, the traders said. (*Business Recorder, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## 6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

### ***Bayer ordered to pay \$1.56bn in latest US trial loss***

A Missouri jury ordered Bayer to pay \$1.56 billion to four plaintiffs who claimed the company's Roundup weedkiller caused injuries including cancer, a verdict that could

intensify investor pressure on the German drugs and agricultural chemicals company to change its legal strategy. The Cole County, Missouri jury found that Bayer's Monsanto business was liable for claims of negligence, design defects and failing to warn plaintiffs of the potential dangers of using Roundup, according to court documents.

Valorie Gunther of New York, Jimmy Draeger of Missouri and Daniel Anderson of California were awarded a combined \$61.1 million in compensatory damages and \$500 million each in punitive damages. Each was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma that they alleged was caused by using Roundup on their family property. Draeger's wife was awarded \$100,000 for the harm she allegedly suffered from her husband's disease.

The punitive damages could be reduced on appeal as it exceeds US Supreme Court guidance. Bayer has said that decades of studies have shown Roundup and its active ingredient, glyphosate, are safe for human use. The verdict is the fourth straight loss in court for Bayer, after the company had been found not liable to plaintiffs in nine consecutive trials. Earlier this month, Union Investment, one of Bayer's top 10 shareholders, called on the company to consider trying to engage with plaintiffs to settle more cases. (*Business Recorder, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

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

### ***US lends \$553m for deep-sea terminal in Sri Lanka***

The United States will lend more than \$550 million for an Indian-led deep-sea container terminal in Sri Lanka, officials said, with the project seen as countering China's rising influence in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka sits astride the world's busiest shipping route, which links the Middle East and East Asia, giving its maritime assets strategic importance. The new Colombo West International Terminal is being built by a consortium led by India's Adani Group — which earlier this year denied accusations of “brazen” corporate fraud by a US short-seller. The Adani facility has an estimated cost of \$700 million and is located immediately next to a similar Chinese-run jetty at the capital's sprawling port. The US government-run International Development Finance Corporation said it was providing \$553 million in funding for the Adani-led project. In December 2017, unable to repay a huge Chinese loan, Sri Lanka allowed China Merchants Port Holdings to take over the southern Hambantota port. The deal raised fears about Beijing's use of “debt traps” in exerting its influence abroad. India and the US have also expressed concerns that a Chinese foothold could give Beijing a military advantage in the Indian Ocean. (*Business Recorder, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

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

### ***IMF board approves move to boost lending resources***

The International Monetary Fund said its executive board approved a proposal for a 50 percent increase in quota resources to be contributed by member countries in proportion to their current IMF shareholdings. The proposal would largely follow a US-backed

plan that would enhance IMF lending resources but delay any IMF shareholding increases for China, India, Brazil and other fast-growing emerging market economies. But the IMF said the board requested an accelerated timetable for developing options to guide realignment of the Fund’s quota formula by June 2025.

The IMF said the 50% increase in quota funding — equivalent to about \$314 billion at current exchange rates — would not increase its overall lending firepower of about \$1 trillion, but would shift the composition to more permanent resources. Currently, the Fund relies on bilateral borrowing arrangements and pledges to a crisis lending fund called the New Arrangements to Borrow for nearly 60% of its lending resources. It said these would be reduced to maintain the Fund’s current overall lending capacity.

The plan still needs approval by the IMF Board of Governors, which includes representatives from all 190 member states, with a vote requested by Dec. 15. The proposal, which saw broad support during the IMF-World Bank annual meetings last month in Morocco, needs an 85% majority of the fund’s voting power to be implemented. (*Business Recorder, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

## **9 # POLICY**

### ***Tough talks expected as nations mull over steps to contain plastic***

As the world’s nations enter another round of talks this week on creating a first-ever treaty to contain plastic pollution, officials are bracing for tough negotiations over whether to limit the amount of plastic being produced or just to focus on management of waste. Working with a document called a “zero draft” that lists possible policies and actions to consider, national delegates to the week-long meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, will be debating which of those options to include in what eventually would become a legally binding treaty by the end of 2024. The world is currently producing about 400 million metric tons of plastic waste every year, with less than 10% of it being recycled, according to the UN Environment Programme, choking landfills and despoiling oceans.

That produced amount is set to surge in the coming decade, as oil companies, which often also produce plastics, look to new sources of revenue amid the energy transition away from fossil fuels. Today, about 98 per cent of single-use plastic — like bottles or packaging — is derived from fossil fuel, according to the UN Environment Programme. EU and dozens of countries, including Japan, Canada and Kenya have called for a strong treaty with “binding provisions” for reducing the production and use of virgin plastic polymers derived from petrochemicals and for eliminating or restricting problematic plastics, and others containing toxic ingredients. That position is opposed by the plastic industry and by oil and petrochemical exporters like Saudi Arabia, who want to see plastic use continue. They argue that the treaty should focus on recycling and reusing plastics, sometimes referred to in the talks as “circularity” in the plastics supply.

Saudi Arabia launched a coalition with countries including Russia, Iran, Cuba, China, and Bahrain called Global Coalition for Plastics Sustainability that will push for the treaty to focus on waste rather than production controls. Countries will also be debating whether the treaty should set transparency standards for chemical use in plastics production. But before they can work on the substantive points, delegates will need to resolve procedural objections that slowed the talks in June when Saudi Arabia said decisions should be adopted by a consensus rather than by majority. A consensus would allow one country to block the ability to make decisions to advance development of the treaty. Most other countries did not support the intervention. Environmental groups said they hoped this week's talks can focus on the treaty's substance, and move beyond the procedural discussions that stall progress. (*Dawn, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Negotiations start in Nairobi over global plastics treaty***

Nations grappling with the plastic “suffocating” nature and leaching into food and the human body began fresh negotiations towards a UN treaty to tackle the growing problem. Some 175 countries agreed last year to conclude by 2024 a binding agreement to combat the plastic pollution littering oceans, mountain tops, and even blood and breast milk. Negotiators have met twice already but the week-long talks in Kenya are the first to consider the concrete details of the treaty, and tensions have emerged over what it should contain. UNEP executive director Inger Andersen said nations agreed to develop a treaty that dealt with the entire life cycle of plastics — from production at their source, to their design and use, to final disposal.

Environment groups attending in Nairobi accused a so-called “low ambition coalition” of largely oil-producing nations including Iran, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain of aligning to frustrate the talks. The International Council of Chemical Associations, a global industry body, said the treaty “should be focused on ending plastic pollution, not plastic production”. “We support a legally binding agreement that accelerates circularity where new plastics are made from used plastics,” the council, which counts Dow and ExxonMobil among its members. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

## **10 # ENVIRONMENT**

### ***Haze lingers in Beijing as fog blankets parts of north China***

Hazy weather hung over Beijing with conditions in other parts of north China possibly worsening, forecasters said, although cold air sweeping in from the northwest is expected to help dissipate the smog. Experts attributed the haze in Beijing, which has lasted for several days, to poor atmospheric diffusion because of unseasonably weak cold air currents from the north. Visibility in most parts of Beijing dropped to less than 500m, China Meteorological Administration. (*Dawn, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

## 10.1 # Health

### *UN sounds warning on health threat posed by climate change*

Climate change poses a health threat through increasing weather disasters and extreme heat, the UN said, calling for better warning systems that could be woven into public health policy. “Climate change threatens to reverse decades of progress towards better health and well-being, particularly in the most vulnerable communities,” the United Nations’ World Meteorological Organisation said. The WMO said climate information was not sufficiently integrated into health service planning. “Scientific know-how and resources can help redress the balance, but are not sufficiently accessible or utilised”.

The WMO said abnormally high heat causes the greatest mortality of all extreme weather but health decision makers in only half of the countries affected can access warning services. Between 2000 and 2019, the estimated deaths due to heat were approximately 489,000 per year, it said, adding: the impacts are underestimated as heat-related mortality could be 30 times higher than what is currently recorded. Whole planet has experienced heatwaves this year.

Countries with limited early warning coverage have disaster mortality which is eight times higher than countries with substantial to comprehensive coverage, according to the WMO report. And the number of medium- or large-scale disaster events “is projected to reach 560 a year — or 1.5 each day — by 2030”, the agency said. “The climate crisis is a health crisis, driving more severe and unpredictable weather events, fuelling disease outbreaks, and contributing to higher rates of non-communicable diseases,” said World Health Organisation chief. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### *Working under sun linked to skin cancer deaths*

Nearly one-in-three deaths from non-melanoma skin cancer are caused by working under the sun, according to joint estimates by WHO and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The research released in the journal ‘Environment International’, finds that outdoor workers carry a large and increasing burden of non-melanoma skin cancer and calls for action to prevent this serious workplace hazard and the loss of workers’ lives it causes. According to the joint estimates, 1.6 billion people of working age (15 years or older) were exposed to solar ultraviolet radiation while working outdoors in 2019, equivalent to 28 per cent of all working-age people. In 2019 alone, almost 19,000 people in 183 countries died from non-melanoma skin cancer due to having worked outdoors in the sun. The majority (65 per cent) were male.

The estimates establish occupational exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation as the work-related risk factor with the third highest attributable burden of cancer deaths globally. Between 2000 and 2019, skin cancer deaths attributable to occupational exposure to sunlight almost doubled increasing by 88pe, from 10,088 deaths in 2000 to 18,960 deaths in 2019. (*Dawn, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 3*)

## **11 # SOCIO-ECONOMICAL CONDITION**

### ***High debt, rising costs limit innovation in developing economies: UN report***

Most governments in developing economies are facing enormous fiscal constraints to implement industrial and innovation policies due to elevated levels of debt, rising debt servicing costs, and significant output losses from the pandemic crisis, the United Nations said. The November edition of the ‘World Economic Situation and Prospects’ released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), said over fifty developing economies spend more than 10 per cent of their revenues on interest payments, and 25 countries spend more than 20pc. Low-income countries are in the direst situation, as many of them are in debt distress or at high risk of debt disaster.

A usual counter-argument emphasises that developing economies, especially the least developed countries, still need to enhance their capital stock before focusing on innovation. However, innovation is a cumulative learning process that should be enhanced to avoid situations of “lock-in” and “path dependency” in commodities and low-productivity sectors, which traps these countries into a vicious cycle of underdevelopment. (*Dawn, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***UN push for financial system reform to help poorest countries***

The United Nations called for a significant overhaul of the global financial system to help the world’s poorest countries and their struggle to fill “enormous financial gaps”. A report from the United Nations Conference on Trade, Investment and Development (UNCTAD) highlighted how multiple crises, from the Covid pandemic to soaring inflation, and declining foreign direct investment have hit poorer countries particularly hard. The 46 so-called least developed countries, or LDCs, suffered a sharp economic slowdown in the first years of the pandemic, leaving their combined per capita growth this year 16 percent below target, UNCTAD said. As a consequence of the economic slowdown, an additional 15 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty.

At the same time, the LDCs face a towering debt crisis, dishing out \$27 billion in 2021 to service that debt — up 37 percent from a year earlier, UNCTAD said. The countries are currently spending almost twice as much on servicing their debt than on healthcare. Faced with such towering challenges, UN agency warned that the LDCs were a far away from reaching Sustainable Development Goals by the 2030 deadline, as agreed upon by all UN member states in 2015. (*Business Recorder, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

## **11.1 # Food**

### ***UN says food system adds \$10 trillion in hidden costs***

The food and agriculture system adds at least \$10 trillion in “hidden costs” to the global economy every year due to unhealthy diets, emissions and undernourishment, a UN agency said. FAO said it conducted an analysis in 154 countries to determine the “true” cost of the agrifood system. The global quantified hidden costs totalled around \$12.7

trillion in 2020, representing almost 10 percent of the global gross domestic product, the FAO estimated. “The future of our agrifood systems and, indeed, of our planet hinges on our willingness to acknowledge these true costs and understand how we all contribute to them,” said FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu.

The study found that 73 percent of the hidden costs are linked to bad diets that are high in ultra-processed foods, fats and sugars, causing obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes. The FAO said the consequences include losses in labour productivity. More than 20 percent of the hidden costs are associated with environmental issues including emissions from greenhouse gases and nitrogen, water use and changes to land use. Low-income countries are the worst hit by these hidden costs, which account for 27% of their GDP compared to 11% for middle-income nations and less than 8% in the wealthy ones. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

### ***One billion children exposed to acute water stress: Unicef***

Almost one billion children are exposed to high or extremely high water stress, stated Unicef, ahead of the much-awaited COP28 climate change summit to be held later this month. Titled ‘The Climate Changed Child’, the report mentioned that some 4.2 billion children are expected to be born over the next 30 years, and there will be no normal climate for them. 739 million children are exposed to high or extremely high water scarcity while 436 million children live in areas with high or extremely high water vulnerability besides 470 million children face high or extremely high drought risk. Around the world, extremes of drought, heat and flooding are becoming more common and are set to become more severe, with some regions already experiencing swings between the three and infrastructure and services struggling to cope with it. Far too many children are facing the double burden of high or very high water scarcity and low or very low drinking water service levels, known as extreme water vulnerability, leaving their lives, health, and well-being at risk. It is one of the key drivers of deaths among children under five from preventable diseases. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***South Asia worst in world for water scarcity: UN***

More children in South Asia are struggling due to severe water scarcity made worse by the impacts of climate change than anywhere else worldwide, the United Nations said. “A staggering 347 million children under 18 are exposed to high or extremely high water scarcity in South Asia, the highest number among all regions in the world,” the UN children’s agency said in a report. The eight-nation region, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, is home to more than one-quarter of the world’s children.

“Safe water is a basic human right,” said Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF chief for South Asia. “Yet millions of children in South Asia don’t have enough to drink in a region plagued by floods, droughts and other extreme weather events, triggered increasingly by climate change”. Last year, 45 million children lacked access to basic drinking water



services in South Asia, more than any other region, but UNICEF said services were expanding rapidly, with that number slated to be halved by 2030. Behind South Asia was Eastern and Southern Africa, where 130 million children are at risk from severe water scarcity. (*Business Recorder, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)

#### ***40pc of conventional baby food contains toxic pesticides: US study***

Nearly 40% of conventional baby food products analyzed in a new US study were found to contain toxic pesticides, while none of the organic products sampled in the survey contained the chemicals. The research, conducted by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) non-profit, looked at 73 products and found at least one pesticide in 22 of them. Many products showed more than one pesticide, and the substances present a dangerous health threat to babies. The best way to avoid pesticides is to buy organic baby food products, which are subjected to much stricter regulations, and are now often comparable in price. (*The News, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 10*)

## **11.2 # Food Scarcity**

### ***27m children driven to hunger by extreme weather worldwide`***

More than 27 million children were driven into hunger and malnutrition by extreme weather events in countries heavily impacted by the climate crisis in 2022, which was a 135 per cent jump from the previous year, according to Save the Children. Save the Children found that children made up nearly half of the 57 million people pushed into crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse across 12 countries because of the extreme weather events in 2022 (about 29 million people in 2018). This was based on data from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) scale, a monitoring system for assessing hunger emergencies in 58 countries. The majority of countries where weather extremes were the main driver of hunger last year were concentrated in the Horn of Africa, with Ethiopia and Somalia accounting for about half of the 27 million children.

Pakistan was one of the 12 countries where last year after devastating flooding submerged one third of the country, affecting 33m people, half of whom were children. One year on, more than 2 million flood-affected children are acutely malnourished, with almost 600,000 children suffering from the deadliest form of malnutrition.

Annually, conflicts and economic shocks push even more children into hunger than weather extremes. Conflict was the primary driver of hunger for 117 million people in 19 countries last year. The IPC data also revealed an eight-fold increase in the number of people facing hunger because of economic shocks in five years, jumping to about 84 million people in 2022 from 10 million in 2018.

Globally, an estimated 774 million children — or one third of the world's child population — are living with the dual impacts of poverty and high climate risk. Last year, Save the Children found that 83 per cent of children in 15 countries reported witnessing climate change or inequality, or both, affecting the world around them. Yet,



children's rights are neglected in climate finance. Currently 2.4 per cent of climate finance from four key global climate funds can be classified as sufficiently considering children, although some funders like the Green Climate Fund are actively working to bridge these gaps. (*Dawn, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### **11.3 # Poverty**

#### ***Poverty soars in conflict-hit Gaza, West Bank: UN***

The socioeconomic “shock” of the Israel-Hamas war will force hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into poverty, a UN report on the conflict’s possible long-term impacts on Gaza and the West Bank warned. After a month of intense Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, the poverty rate in the Palestinian territories is expected to soar from 26.7 percent to 31.9 percent, according to estimates from the UN Development Program (UNDP). That represents about 285,000 people added to the impoverished pre-war population of almost 1.5 million. The poverty rate could reach 35.8 percent if the conflict lasts another month, and rise further to 38.8 percent if it lasts two months.

Projected GDP growth in the Palestinian territories could fall 4.2 to 12.2 percent from pre-war estimates, depending on how long the fighting lasts — or losses of between \$857 million and \$2.5 billion. Unemployment is also expected to increase between five and 13 percentage points, from a pre-war level of 24.7 percent. An estimated 182,000 jobs have already been lost in the Gaza Strip, and an additional 208,000 jobs have been eliminated in the West Bank, due to restricted movement of goods and the inability of Palestinians to cross into Israel to work. In the Gaza Strip, at least 45 percent of homes have been destroyed or damaged, but businesses and agricultural lands have also been hit. (*Business Recorder, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 7*)

### **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### ***Lives, uplift gains lost due to climate crisis: UN***

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) says the cascading impacts of disasters in Pakistan have caused significant loss of life and reversed development gains. In order to respond to the impacts of the climate crisis, it points out, the country must understand, identify and attribute cascading effects to specific climate shocks and stressors. This will help Pakistan develop ways to build adaptive capacity and resilience, according to the UNEP report titled “Adaptation Gap Report 2023: Under-financed, Underprepared — Inadequate Investment and Planning on climate adaptation leaves world exposed”, which was released ahead of the COP28 climate talks taking place in Dubai later this month. The report, issued on Nov 3, includes a case study on ‘Cascading impacts and floods: Building capacity in Pakistan’, which will be released shortly.

As a result of the growing adaptation finance needs and faltering flows, the current adaptation finance gap is now estimated to be \$194-366 billion per year. At the same time, adaptation planning and implementation appear to be plateauing. This failure to

adapt has massive implications for losses and damages, particularly for the most vulnerable. After a major update over previous years, the report found that the funds required for adaptation in developing countries are higher estimated to be in a plausible central range of \$215bn to \$387bn a year this decade. The modelled costs of adaptation in developing countries are estimated at \$215bn per year this decade & are projected to rise significantly by 2050. Adaptation finance needed to implement domestic adaptation priorities, based on extrapolation of costed Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans to all developing countries, is estimated at \$387bn per year.

Studies indicated that every billion invested in adaptation against coastal flooding leads to a \$14bn reduction in economic damages. Similarly, \$16 billion per year invested in agriculture would prevent around 78m people from starving or chronic hunger because of climate impacts. The report identified seven ways to increasing financing, including through domestic expenditure and international and private sector finance. Additional avenues include remittances, increasing and tailoring finance to Small and Medium Enterprises and a reform of the global financial architecture. The new Loss and Damage fund will also need to move towards more innovative financing mechanisms to reach the necessary scale of investment. (*Dawn, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***WB poised to host loss & damage fund, despite concerns***

Countries moved a step closer to getting a fund off the ground to help poor states damaged by climate disasters, despite reservations from the US and some other countries. The deal to create a “loss and damage” fund was hailed as a breakthrough for developing country negotiators at UN climate talks in Egypt last year, overcoming years of resistance from wealthy nations. But in the past 11 months, governments have struggled to reach consensus on the details of the fund, such as who will pay and where the fund will be located. Housing a fund at World Bank, whose presidents are appointed by the US, would give donor countries outsized influence over the fund, developing countries argue. To get all countries on board, it was agreed the World Bank would serve as interim trustee for four years. (*Dawn, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Just 4pc of top cos meet climate target guidelines: study***

Half of the world’s 2,000 biggest listed companies have set a target to get to net-zero emissions by mid-century, but just a fraction meet tough United Nations guidelines for what constitutes a quality pledge. Net Zero Tracker, an independent data consortium including Oxford University, said corporate targets from Forbes2000 index companies had jumped 40% to 1,003 in October 2023, from 702 in June 2022, covering two-thirds of revenues, some \$27 trillion. (*Business Recorder, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***EU pledges ‘substantial’ contribution to COP28 climate damage fund***

European Union will make a “substantial” financial contribution to a new international fund addressing the destruction caused by climate change, the EU’s Executive Commission said. The world-first climate “loss and damage” fund is set to be launched

during the United Nations COP28 climate summit to be held from Nov 30 to Dec 12 in Dubai. “The Commissioner is ready to announce substantial financial contribution by the EU and its member states to the loss & damage fund at COP28 in the context of an ambitious outcome at COP28,” the European Commission and the UAE’s incoming COP28 president said in a joint statement, referring to EU Climate Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra. (*Dawn, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 13*)

### ***Every industry should be held responsible on climate: COP28 president***

The president of a pivotal UN climate summit defended the large presence of industry representatives at the negotiations, saying private sector engagement was essential to curb global heating. “Everyone needs to be part of this process and everyone needs to be held responsible and everyone needs to be held accountable,” COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber, told. “That includes all industries and in particular heavy emitting industries like aviation, transportation, aluminium, cement, steel, as well as the oil and gas industry”. (*The News, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 12*)

### ***Heat, disease, air pollution: how climate change impacts health***

Growing calls for the world to come to grips with the many ways that global warming affects human health have prompted the first day dedicated to the issue at crunch UN climate talks starting next week. Extreme heat, air pollution and the increasing spread of deadly infectious diseases are just some of the reasons why WHO has called climate change the single biggest health threat facing humanity. However, under current national carbon-cutting plans, the world is on track to warm up to 2.9 degrees Celsius this century. While no one will be completely safe from the effects of climate change, experts expect that most at risk will be children, women, the elderly, migrants and people in less developed countries which have emitted the least planet-warming greenhouse gases. On Dec 3, the COP28 negotiations in Dubai will host the first “health day” ever held at the climate negotiations.

This year is widely expected to be the hottest on record. Heat is believed to have caused more than 70,000 deaths in Europe during summer last year, revising the previous number up from 62,000. Worldwide, people were exposed to an average of 86 days of life-threatening temperatures last year. The number of people over 65 who died from heat rose by 85 per cent from 1991-2000 to 2013-2022. And by 2050, more than five times more people will die from the heat each year under a 2 degrees Celsius warming scenario, the report projected. More droughts will also drive rising hunger. Under the scenario of 2 degrees Celsius warming by the end of the century, 520 million more people will experience moderate or severe food insecurity by 2050. Meanwhile, other extreme weather events such as storms, floods and fires will continue to threaten the health of people across the world. Almost 99 per cent of the world’s population breathes air that exceeds the WHO’s guidelines for air pollution.

The changing climate means that mosquitoes, birds and mammals will roam beyond their previous habitats, raising the threat that they could spread infectious diseases with

them. Mosquito-borne diseases that pose a greater risk of spreading due to climate change include dengue, chikungunya, Zika, West Nile virus and malaria. The transmission potential for dengue alone will increase by 36pc with 2 degrees Celsius warming. Storms and floods create stagnant water that are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and also increase the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and diarrhoea. Scientists also fear that mammals straying into new areas could share diseases with each other, potentially creating new viruses that could then jump over to humans. (*Dawn, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 10*)

### ***Climate change already reducing global GDP: report***

Climate change is already shaving billions off the world's economy, with developing countries hardest hit, according to a new report published Tuesday ahead of COP28 climate negotiations. The report by the University of Delaware estimated that impacts from human-caused climate change cut 6.3 percent from global economic output last year, when weighted across populations. The figures reflect both direct consequences of climate change — such as disruptions to agriculture and manufacturing, and reduced productivity from high heat — as well as spill-over impacts on global trade and investments. (*Business Recorder, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

## **12.1 # Carbon Emission**

### ***2022 saw record greenhouse emissions: WMO***

The atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases hit a record high last year, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said, emphasising that there was ‘no end in sight’ to this concerning trend. “Despite decades of warnings from the scientific community, thousands of pages of reports and dozens of climate conferences, we are still heading in the wrong direction,” said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

The EU has one of the most ambitious climate change policies of any major economy, having passed laws to deliver its 2030 target to cut net emissions by 55pc from 1990 levels, which analysts say is the minimum needed to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Despite intensified efforts from certain nations, the report underscores the imperative for more immediate and substantial actions to redirect the world's emissions trajectory downward. (*Dawn, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***UAE plans to pump CO<sub>2</sub> into rock in bid to target emissions***

High in remote mountains in the oil-rich UAE, a new plant will soon take atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and pump it into rock — part of controversial attempts to target planet-heating emissions without abandoning fossil fuels. Using novel technology developed by Omani start-up 44.01, the solar-powered plant will suck carbon dioxide from the air, dissolve it in seawater and inject it deep underground, where it will mineralise over a period of months. The first CO<sub>2</sub> injection is expected during COP28 which starts in nearby Dubai, and where the debate over hydrocarbons will be a key battle between campaigners and the oil lobby.

The UAE is the world's seventh largest oil producer, and plans to invest \$150bn by 2027 to expand its oil and gas production capacity. Oil producers are throwing their weight behind carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology as a global warming solution despite criticism from climate experts who caution it is insufficient to tackle the crisis. With little investment and few projects in operation around the world so far, the technology is currently nowhere near the scale needed to make a difference to global emissions. (*Dawn, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

## **12.2 # Climate Crisis**

### ***Earth to warm up to catastrophic 2.9 degrees Celsius: UN***

Countries' greenhouse gas-cutting pledges put Earth on track for warming far beyond key limits, potentially up to a catastrophic 2.9 degrees Celsius this century, the UN said. The UN Environment Programme's annual Emissions Gap report is released just ahead of crucial COP28 climate talks in Dubai and will feed into the global response to a sobering official "stocktake" of the failure to curb warming so far. With this year expected to be the hottest in human history, UNEP said "the world is witnessing a disturbing acceleration in the number, speed and scale of broken climate records". Taking into account countries' carbon-cutting plans, UNEP warned that the planet is on a path for disastrous heating of between 2.5C and 2.9C by 2100. Based just on existing policies and emissions-cutting efforts, global warming would reach 3C. But the world continues to pump record levels of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, with emissions up 1.2 percent from 2021 to 2022, adding that increase was largely driven by burning of fossil fuels and industrial processes. (*Dawn, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***World's largest iceberg breaks free, drifts past Antarctica's northern tip***

World's largest iceberg is on move for first time in more than three decades. At almost 4,000 square km, Antarctic iceberg, A23a, is roughly three times the size of New York City. Since calving off West Antarctica's Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf in 1986, the iceberg, which once hosted a Soviet research station, has largely been stranded after its base became stuck on the floor of the Weddell Sea. (*Dawn, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 2*)

### ***Climate crisis: 'children are paying the highest price'***

"Children are the least responsible for contributing to the climate crisis, yet pay the highest price for it" remarked Dr Sanjay Wijesekera, Regional Director for UNICEF's Regional Office of South Asia while addressing the two-day conference on climate change, "Opportunities for Change", held at the Aga Khan University. Dr Wijesekera emphasized on how the youngest populations around the world, and particularly in South Asia, are at a risk for encountering severe biohazards for the climate change that has been triggered over the past decades. He added that while children's immune systems are developing, they breathe at a faster rate than adults, inhale more air pollutants, and their bodies can't adapt faster to temperature changes. This leaves them at a high exposure for illnesses including dehydration, organ failure, high blood pressure, and seizures. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 4*)

## **12.3 # Climate Financing**

### ***Rich nations ‘likely’ met \$100bn climate finance goal: OECD***

Wealthy nations likely met their goal of providing \$100 billion in annual climate finance to poorer nations last year — two years later than promised and only a fraction of the “extensive needs”, OECD said. OECD report comes ahead of the UN’s COP28 climate negotiations later this month in Dubai, where finance will be a major sticking point. In 2009, richer countries promised to reach \$100 billion annually in funding for these priorities by 2020. Failure to meet the target on time has damaged trust in international climate negotiations. In most up to date figures, the OECD said richer countries reached \$89.6b in total funding for 2021. (*Business Recorder, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 11*)

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

### ***This year set to be warmest in 125,000 years, say scientists***

This year is set to be world’s warmest in 125,000 years, EU scientists said, after data showed last month was hottest October on record by a massive margin. Last month exceeded previous highest October average temperature, from 2019, by 0.4 degrees Celsius, the EU’s Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) Deputy Director said, describing the temperature anomaly as “very extreme”. That has made 2023 as a whole “virtually certain” to be the warmest year recorded. In 2023, includes floods that killed thousands of people in Libya, severe heatwaves in South America, and Canada’s worst wildfire season on record. Globally, the average surface air temperature in October of 15.3C, was 1.7C warmer than the average for October in 1850-1900, which Copernicus defines as the pre-industrial period. (*Dawn, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

## **13.1 # Flood**

### ***Floods kill over 20, displace thousands in Ethiopia***

More than 20 people have died and over 12,000 others have been forced out of their homes in Ethiopia’s Somali region due to flash flooding triggered by torrential rains, the regional government said. (*The News, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***Somalia floods kill 30, displace 500,000 people***

Heavy rains that triggered flash flooding in Somalia have caused around half a million people to flee their homes and killed more than 30 people. The disaster comes on the heels of a record drought that has left millions of Somalis on the brink of famine. “Half a million of people have fled from their houses,” said Information Minister, warning that 1.2m others could be affected. (*Dawn, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***70 perish in Kenya flood emergency***

70 people have perished in widespread flooding in Kenya that has also driven tens of thousands of people from their homes. Kenya and Somalia and Ethiopia, countries that are only just emerging from the worst drought in four decades, are now experiencing devastating flooding caused by rains. (*The News, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 11*)

### ***Lightning strikes in Gujarat kill 24***

Twenty-four people have died by lightning strikes and about 23 have been left injured in rain-related incidents in the western Indian state of Gujarat over the past two days. Rains caused damage to houses & loss of cattle. (*Dawn, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 10*)

## **13.2 # Storm**

### ***Six die as storm lashes Europe with furious winds***

Storm Ciaran into Western Europe, killing six people and forcing schools, airports and train services to shut down. About 1,300 people had to be relocated to campsites or shelters, and several houses were evacuated. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***Storm claims 15 lives in Western Europe***

The death toll from Storm Ciaran rose to at least 15 across Western Europe, (*Dawn, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Deadly storm cuts power to nearly 2m people in Russia, Ukraine***

Almost two million people in Russia and occupied Ukraine were left without power, after hurricane force winds and heavy rains cut electricity lines and caused widespread flooding. (*Business Recorder, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 11*)

## **13.3 # Wildfires**

### ***Three dead after plane crashes in Australia bushfire***

Three people were killed after a light aircraft crashed in remote northern Australia while helping in the battle against bushfires. It was being used for fire mapping as more than a dozen fires continue to burn across state. (*The News, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

### ***Rescuers struggle to find survivors as quake kills over 150 in Nepal***

Rescue workers in Nepal began digging through the rubble of collapsed houses with their bare hands, searching for survivors after the country's worst earthquake in eight years killed 157 people. German Research Centre for Geosciences measured it at 5.7 and the US Geological Survey at 5.6. The quake is the deadliest since 2015 when about 9,000 people were killed in two earthquakes. (*Dawn, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Thousands evacuated as Iceland braces for volcanic eruption***

Some 900 earthquakes hit southern Iceland, adding to tens of thousands of tremors that rattled the region in recent weeks as the country braces for what could become a significant volcanic eruption. Almost 4,000 people were evacuated as authorities feared that molten rock would rise to the surface of the earth and potentially hit a coastal town and a geothermal power station. (*Business Recorder, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 5*)



## **15 # RESISTANCE**

### ***Violent BD protests shut hundreds of garment factories***

Hundreds of garment factories in Bangladesh have shuttered as thousands of workers staged violent protests to demand a near-tripling of their wages, police said. Bangladesh's 3,500 factories account for around 85% of the South Asian country's \$55 billion in annual exports, supplying major Western brands including Adidas, Gap, H&M and Levi Strauss. But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority of whom are women whose monthly wages start at 8,300 taka (\$75). Police said workers had ransacked dozens of factories across Gazipur and other industrial neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the capital Dhaka since the protests began.

More than 250 garment factories have been shut in the protests. Up to 50 factories have been ransacked and vandalised, including four or five which were set alight. Two workers have been killed and dozens more injured since protests began. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, which represents factory owners, has offered a 25pc pay raise. Pledge is significantly short of 23,000 taka (\$209) monthly wage that protest campaign has called for. (*Dawn, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Page 12*)

### ***Bangladesh garment workers clash with police as factories reopen***

Striking Bangladesh garment workers clashed with police near the capital as factories reopened in defiance of a protest campaign demanding a near-tripling of wages. Police said some 600 businesses shuttered over week had reopened in areas worst-hit by strike, which saw some factories ransacked & set alight. (*Dawn, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***BD police clash with 25,000 protesting garment workers***

Up to 25,000 garment workers clashed with police in Bangladesh, officials said, as protests rejecting a government-offered pay rise forced the closure of at least 100 factories outside Dhaka. (*Business Recorder, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

### ***Hundreds of activists demand plastic action in Kenya***

Hundreds of environmental campaigners marched in the Kenyan capital Nairobi demanding drastic curbs on plastic production, ahead of a meeting to negotiate a global plastics treaty. Representatives from more than 170 nations will meet in Nairobi to negotiate what concrete measures should be included in a binding worldwide treaty to end plastic pollution. Marchers called for the talks to focus on cutting the amount of plastic produced and waved placards reading "Plastic crisis = climate crisis" and "End multi-generational toxic exposure". They chanted "let polluters pay the price". (*Dawn, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 10*)

## **15. 1 # Pro-Palestinian Protests**

### ***Thousands attend London pro-Palestinian rally***

Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in London to call for a ceasefire in Gaza amid ongoing bombardments by Israel in the besieged territory. It was the fourth



consecutive week that the British capital was the venue for a large rally in support of Palestinians since last month. (*Dawn, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 11*)

### ***Thousands protest across Iran against US, Israel***

Thousands of protesters rallied across Iran against the United States and Israel and in support of Palestinians in the war-torn Gaza Strip. “Down with USA” and “Down with Israel”, chanted demonstrators gathered in front of the former US embassy in Tehran. (*Business Recorder, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 1*)

### ***Turkish police tear gas pro-Palestinian protesters at air base***

Turkish police fired tear gas to disperse a pro-Palestinian rally staged outside a military base housing US forces just hours before the arrival in Ankara of Washington’s top diplomat. The protest outside the Incirlik Air Base in southeastern Turkiye was organised by the IHH humanitarian relief fund, which in 2010 led a flotilla to Gaza that sparked Israeli raids in which 10 civilians died. (*Dawn, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 11*)

### ***300,000 attend London`s pro-Palestinian rally***

More than 100,000 pro-Palestinian protesters marched through central London, with police making more than 80 arrests as they sought to avert clashes between the marchers and groups opposed to the rally. (*Dawn, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 11*)

### ***Paris protesters call for end to Gaza massacre***

Several thousand people demonstrated in Paris under the rallying cry “Stop the massacre in Gaza”. The left-wing organisers called for France to “demand an immediate ceasefire”. (*Business Recorder, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Page 8*)

### ***Thousands march in UK for full ceasefire in Gaza***

Tens of thousands of protesters marched in London demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza as a temporary truce largely held in the besieged strip. It was the latest large pro-Palestinian demonstration in the British capital since the unprecedented Oct 7 events. Some 1,500 police officers were on duty for the protest, including 500 that had been brought in from forces outside of London. (*Dawn, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 11*)

### ***Trade union opposes sending nurses, workers to Israel***

India agreed, in May 2023, to send over 40,000 people to Israel to address a shortage of nurses and construction workers. The bilateral agreement has been placed in the Israeli Parliament (Knesset). The government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants more than 100,000 people from India in sectors like nursing and construction. “The Construction Workers Federation of India strongly objects to any attempt to send the poor construction workers of our country to Israel to overcome its shortage of workers and in any way support its genocidal attacks on Palestine killing thousands of innocent people including children and women,” the Centre of Indian Trade Unions said recently. (*The News, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Page 11*)

## **About Us**

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

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

### **Our Mission**

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

### **Our Vision**

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

### **Our Objectives**

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

## **Roots for Equity**

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