

IDPS, DISASTER & FOOD SECURITY**IDPs & Disaster****Do Not Blow Things Out Of Proportion**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced that it would suspend its operations in Peshawar and Karachi after the killing of Khalil Dale, an ICRC British nurse who was kidnapped in January and killed on April 29 in Quetta. In Pakistan's development world, Dale's death has become another significant setback. Many speculate that other international NGOs will also start rolling back their operations after an increase of high-profile kidnappings and murders of foreign aid workers at the beginning of this year. The Country Director of Save the Children, David Bright, confirms that his organization has no plans to roll back any operations, but he does believe that high-profile incidents at the start of the year are a cause for concern. The hardest hit conflict areas of Pakistan Balochistan and Fata have become almost entirely inaccessible to international NGOs (iNGOs). Both regions have been cut off by authorities and NOCs are required to work there, which is a bureaucratic and difficult process. PLAN, which faced a militant attack on its office in Mansehra in 2008, went through a process of re-evaluation after the attack to decide if it should continue operations in Pakistan. However, there is no doubt that the security situation has discouraged some organizations. A local journalist of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that after 2005, the presence of INGOs decreased. Movement of international staff was mostly restricted. There has been some improvement in numbers since 2009 as situation has gotten under more control. Another developmental professional, who has extensive experience with INGOs, UN organizations and USAID, contradicted reports of INGO presence decreasing. Most of the NGOs who have reduced operations are those who are facing the crunch of less funding by the US when political ties worsen. But if you consider how many disasters Pakistan has faced in terms of IDPs, floods, and the amount of aid coming in from Japan, Europe and Scandinavian countries, you'll realize that there is a lot greater presence now. Even while this may be true, the reality is that INGOs are on the losing end of the perception game right now. The fact is that the government has toughened its stance, you are not allowed to go to Fata or Balochistan, you can't leave Peshawar without permission – and this is for a reason. There is a perception that NGOs are agents of the West and lot of doubt around their activities – so NGOs have to tread really carefully and follow the rules and regulations set by authorities.

Dawn – May 11, 2012

NDMA Advises Provinces to Allocate Rs. 20 Billion for Disasters

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has advised all four provinces to allocate a budget of around Rs20 billion for disasters, said NDMA Chairman Dr. Zafar Qadir. The NDMA chairman said that while taking precautionary measures the National Disaster Management Authority has advised all provinces to make their arrangements and assessments to deal with disasters, especially during monsoon season, as there are predictions of big disasters. He said that the NDMA has suggested to all four provinces and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to allocate budgets to deal with disasters. He stated that they had suggested to:

- Punjab and Sindh to allocate Rs5 billion each
- Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Rs3 billion each
- AJK Rs2 billion

- GB and FATA Rs1 billion each

Dr. Zafar Qadir said that they had suggested to provinces to make full arrangements to deal with monsoon and ensure availability of tents, food, medicines and proper training of their staff for distribution of relief items and shifting of affected people to safer places. He said that the NDMA will arrange training workshops in collaboration with the UN and Pakistan Army for staff members of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) for distribution of relief items and work effectively during disaster. The NDMA chairman said that the prime minister has released funds to make Disaster Response Force. In the first phase, this force would be made in Islamabad and then in provinces. Referring to India, he said that it has more than 11,000 members of Disaster Response Force to tackle natural calamities and its NDMA has a budget of \$3 billion. Dr Zafar Qadir said that they had given a policy to the government to implement Country Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM), “in which we would mobilize young people, community workers, NGOs and government departments to get their help during disasters. He said that telemetric system and early warning system would be installed on every canal and river to monitor water flow. The NDMA chairman said that for the first time in the world we are going to introduce disaster risk insurance for people who are living in low-lying and vulnerable areas. He said under the insurance policy people would get five benefits including:

- Life insurance of bread earner of the family
- Food security during disaster
- Shelter during and after disaster
- Crops
- Livestock and small business compensation

International insurance companies would also participate in the bidding. Dr. Zafar Qadir said they have suggested to the government to constitute a risk financing fund and deposit premium money for insurance companies in this fund. “We will also request people to donate Zakat and charity money in this fund to help their brothers and sisters during hard time. “In this way, we will be able to generate our own money for rainy days instead of waiting for help from international donors. He said they were trying their best to approve this policy from Cabinet this year and to implement it as soon as possible.

The News - May 10, 2012

PILER Calls for Probe into Fire Incident at Flood Relief Camp

The Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) condemned the fire incident that resulted in the destruction of 700 tents out of the total 800 in the tent city of flood-affected families stationed at Keamari Town. The affected families from Qambar-Shahdadkot, Shikarpur, Kashmore and other districts of northern Sindh who had shifted after floods had found the place near coastal area safe for the living. This Labor Day, these families of agriculture workers have become destitute yet again after the 2010 floods. PILER Executive Director Karamat Ali demanded an inquiry into the incident and punishment for those responsible. He said the fire had put the flood victims vulnerable to another disaster. These people should be compensated as per their loss and be given alternative place so that they may live a protected life. PILER head demanded the government to announce a special package for the victim families so that they may live a safe life. He said these people were brought to Karachi and Hyderabad at the time of floods on the government’s commitment that they would be provided with shelter and support. Unfortunately, majority of them were left unattended. They started life by searching cheaper wages but for the last few months they were facing threats from influential persons of the area, asking them to leave the land or face

tyranny. At around 2 pm when children were playing outside, they saw some people came close to the tents and sprinkle oil. Moments later flames engulfed the entire tent city, turning it into ashes instantly.

Daily Times - May 02, 2012

With Much to Be Done In Swat, Over 140 Houses Built In Four Villages

The floods destroyed their homes and fields; militancy drove them out of their homes, leaving everything behind; and then they had to bear the harsh lives in camps, only to return to their wrecked hometowns. The people of Swat have been through some testing times. An estimated 4,000 houses in Swat Valley were destroyed by the floods in 2010, of which 80 percent were destroyed in northern parts of the valley alone. There is much to be done in the valley to help it thrive as it used to, but a few villages of Madyan where over 90 per cent of houses and agricultural lands were destroyed by the floods have ironically come out more fortunate in the aftermath. With the help of two non-government organizations (NGOs), the villagers have constructed 145 new homes in their areas. The Villages are:

- Drabo
- Aryana
- Damana
- Qandeel

With reconstruction work almost complete, all they ask is from the government to rehabilitate their lands to jumpstart their livelihoods. Syed Fursan, a resident of Aryana village said everything got washed away in the floods: our belongings, our lands, our animals. The only thing we managed to save was our lives. Given the scale of the destruction, we did not believe we could reconstruct our villages. But with the help from the NGOs I think we have done a tremendous job. Mohmmad Yousuf, also a local of Aryana village, said the NGOs helped us irrespective of political affiliation and they thank them for it. Shifting into his new house along with his 16 family members. Behram Khan, 75, a resident of Drabo village, said he is finally content. However, he criticized the government for failing to help the villagers, adding that he got only Rs40, 000 from Watan Cards in the past two years.

The Express Tribune - May 7th, 2012

UAE Opens \$5.5 Million Project for Flood-Hit Families in Sindh: Sindh

The UAE Red Crescent launched a project worth \$5.5 million for helping at least 1100 widows and children of special needs who were hard hit by the flash-flood in Badin district of the Sindh province last year. A delegation of UAE Red Crescent headed by Ahmed Humaid Al Mazroui, Chairman of Board of Directors handed over animals like cows to the affected families in order to enable them find a sustainable source of income and help them start a new life instead of depending upon immediate relief. National Assembly's Speaker said that last year's flood was the worst in country's history which affected some 20 million people and the province of Sindh was the worst affected area. It destroyed about 22 percent of agricultural land which had a great impact on development projects in the province as it caused significant damage.

The News - May 08, 2012

50 Percent IDPs from Khyber Agency Are Children: UNICEF

The UNICEF estimates out of over a quarter of a million people internally displaced from Khyber Agency since January 50 per cent is children. The statistics mentioned in Situation Report shared by Save the Children:

- 12 per cent of the displaced are younger than 2
- 28 per cent are younger than 5

As with humanitarian aid, the only schools available to displaced children are located inside Jalozai. As a result, off-camp IDP children have nowhere to go during the day, often roaming the streets in dangerous and unfamiliar neighborhoods. Many are exhibiting signs of psychological distress. Returning to school and getting psychosocial support in child friendly environments is critical in their protection, educational and emotional development. The military operations in Bara Tehsil, Khyber Agency, have displaced over a quarter of a million people since January. These Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are fleeing into Peshawar and surrounding areas. According to UNHCR, 207,521 IDPs have registered at the Jalozai IDP camp near Peshawar since January 2012. This figure represents only half of the estimated number of recently displaced persons (440,000). All newly displaced IDPs and those displaced in previous conflicts total more than 687,550 IDPs in the area with more expected in the coming weeks as military operations continue. Around 45 per cent of IDPs are not registered at Jalozai, currently the only registration point. The primary reason cited for not registering is over-crowding. The humanitarian agencies predict IDPs will not be able to return home until at least early 2013. Among the total, 85 per cent of off-camp IDPs are living in Peshawar; 15 per cent in Nowshera and Kohat.

The News – May 03, 2012

Flood-Hit People Hit Out At Government Sluggish Relief Work: Flood

Flood-affected communities have expressed their dissatisfaction over relief and recovery efforts in the provinces devastated by the 2010 and 2011 floods and warned that millions of poor people may be affected as a result of the flawed preparedness and early warning systems. The flood affected communities from Sindh while said that local communities have been under water for the last seven months as the flood water has yet not removed from their areas/ villages via dewatering. A number of union councils are still under water:

- Umerkot
- Sanghar
- Mirpurkhas
- Benazirabad
- Badin
- Other districts

Villages are disconnected from each other and local communities are unable to cultivate crops or provide fodder to their remaining livestock due to the standing water, which also affects soil fertility. They claimed that about 40 per cent of the flood-affected communities may not be able to cultivate their crops in Sindh. Schools and colleges in flood-hit areas were completely destroyed. The ones spared by the floods became camps. Now, even those schools are in ruins and the furniture and other facilities are missing. Millions of children have been deprived of education for the last seven months, and there is no planned project to rehabilitate these schools, local community representatives alleged. The local communities from Balochistan alleged that 2010

floods were manmade disaster for Jaffarabad and other districts of Balochistan as flood water was deliberately given passage to inundate Balochistan.

The local communities from Punjab alleged that there was large scale corruption in the provision of Watan Cards in Multan and other flood-affected districts. The flood affected communities from K-P said they are still waiting for shelter, claiming the government has failed to provide it. Peoples Accountability Commission on Floods Member Mohammed Ismail Kunbhar alleged there has been large scale mismanagement in the provision of Pakistan Cards in the flood affected communities of Sindh. There were no set criteria for the distribution of cards and 100,000 eligible flood affected people have not received them. Due to mismanagement, 50,000 cards were deactivated. Despite the government commitment that second installment of funding through Pakistan cards will be provided within three months, the funding has still not been received.

He further alleged that large scale mismanagement and corruption was found in the distribution of agriculture inputs in Sindh. Despite requests from civil society and international humanitarian agency Sindh Government has failed to provide accurate list of the beneficiaries of agriculture input. In majority cases agriculture input especially wheat was provided to the landlords, who did not share it with sharecroppers. NDMA Member Operations Brigadier Sajid Naeem said that as result of devolution, PDMAs and DDMA's are responsible for disaster relief operations, while NDMA coordinates on policy making. He provided data showing that the federal government remained active in providing budgets and relief goods to PDMAs for flood-hit communities in Sindh and other provinces. He said the second installment of Watan Cards was to be provided only to flood-affected people whose houses were completely destroyed and this amount has been provided to them. The drainage problem in Sindh was due to the total lack of a drainage system. He also acknowledged that the Pakistan Meteorological Department can only provide four days advance warning. He said that work on improving the early warning system in Pakistan has been initiated with the support of the Government of Japan; however it will take two years.

The Express Tribune - May 01, 2012

Plan Impressive, Work Depressive: KPK

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has prepared a seemingly impressive contingency plan for the upcoming monsoon season in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but no practical progress could be seen so far. The plan existing on papers only suggests that Pakistan Meteorological Department would upgrade its obsolete weather forecasting system in the region to lessen possible damage from floods in July and September in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where six districts have been declared disaster prone by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The NDMA recently warned provinces that heavy rains in upcoming monsoon season between mid-July and mid-September might trigger floods and affect some 29 million people across the country. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the NDMA has identified Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Swat, Mardan and Dera Ismail Khan as prone to natural calamity in next monsoon. In its contingency plan the provincial authority had pointed out that the Met Department should enhance capacity of the weather forecasting station in Peshawar, install radar system at Cherat in Nowshera district, improve all observatories, establish flash flood forecasting centre for Kalpani in Mardan district and other vulnerable areas and increase capacity of line departments.

They said that these measures had been recommended in the aftermath of July 2010 floods that caused widespread devastation in 20 districts of the province, leaving over 1,100 people dead and displacing thousands of families. Instead of installation of latest forecasting system all future plans have been dumped in files. An official said that due to unavailability of latest forecasting system in

the province the Peshawar centre would depend on Lahore and Islamabad centers or some friendly countries for obtaining weather data. The plans had been approved after completion of feasibility reports and PC-I, but not a single one had been executed and even the main Peshawar station was relying on outdated forecast system. The federal and provincial governments would provide financial assistance for installation of radar system in Cherat. They said that PC-I for establishing flash flood forecasting centre for Kalpani had been approved and the Met Department would bear its Rs300 million cost. For improvement of observatories, they said, the Met Department had sent a proposal to the Economic Affairs Division to seek financial support from Japan International Cooperation Agency, but there has been no progress as yet.

After 2010 floods the PDMA had offered funds for purchase of radar system, but the federal agencies did not accept that offer. The chief secretary in Peshawar again directed the department and its offices in districts to clear waterways to minimize losses from expected floods. He said that meteorologists had warned that delay in snow melting in upper parts of the province could cause heavy floods in rivers. The contingency plan says that most of the centers predict normal to below normal rains in the country during coming monsoon, but the current abnormal climatic conditions could result in possibilities of abnormally heavy rains which could trigger flash floods in rivers and streams. According to the plan, the assumed water level in Kabul River at Nowshera could be 300,000 cusecs in 2012 monsoon compared to 500,000 cusecs in 2010. Prediction for the Indus River in coming monsoon is 750,000 cusecs against 1,100,000 cusecs in 2010.

Dawn – May 21, 2012

Khyber Fighting Uproots Hundreds of Thousands: Report By Save the Children

Nearly half a million Pakistanis are estimated to have fled fighting between soldiers and militia on the Afghan border with more than 264,000 registered for aid. Authorities say increasing numbers of women and children are fleeing Khyber, one of the seven districts that make up Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal belt, which is considered a stronghold of Taliban. More than 500 families are arriving on a daily basis at Jalojai camp, near the northwestern city of Peshawar, camp administrator Noor Akbar told. "We have registered 56,842 families or 264,253 individuals so far since the offensive was launched in January. "We expect more will flee as the fighting continues." Save the Children, a non-profitable organization, said it estimated that 63,000 families, or nearly half a million people, have already been displaced from Khyber. The charity's estimate was much higher than the number registered because most people chose to live outside the camp and because new arrivals were mostly women and children put off by long registration queues. "Save the Children estimates that over 600,000 in total will be displaced if military operations continue - among which over 300,000 are expected to be children," the charity said in a report. Last month, the UN refugee agency said more than 181,000 people had fled the fighting and that 85 percent of those registered chose not live in Jalojai.

Daily Times – May 15, 2012

Rains, Floods May Affect 29m, Says NDMA

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) warned that upcoming monsoon season between mid-July and mid-September might trigger floods and affect some 29 million people across the country. NDMA chairman Dr Zafar Iqbal Qadir asked provinces to redouble their efforts to meet the threat and advised them to invest in disaster preparedness well in time to minimize losses.

He said 29 districts had been identified to be prone to the impact of flooding and were likely to be hit by heavy rains and floods directly linked to climate change.

In Sindh	In Punjab	In Balochistan	In Khyber Paktunkhwa
Badin	Dera Ghazi Khan	Musa Khel	Nowshera
Thatta	Muzaffargarh	Loralai	Charsadda
Tando Muhammad Khan	Rajanpur	Barkhan	Swat
Tando Allah Yar	Layyah	Kalat	Mardan
Mirpurkhas	Bahawalpur	Lasbella	Peshawar
Sanghar	Rahim Yar Khan		Dera Ismael Khan
Umar Kot	Bhakkar		
Tharparkar	Mianwali		
Dadu	Faisalabad		

Mr. Qadir said provinces had been sensitized to brace up for the worst case scenario, pointing out that implementation of the disaster management measures was the job of provinces after the adoption of the 18th Amendment. Provinces had prepared disaster management plans which would be shortly submitted to the NDMA. The plans will be shared with relevant ministries and stakeholders and the draft national disaster management policy will be sent to the cabinet for approval next month.

Dawn – May 17, 2012

Pakistan among the Most Vulnerable Countries: Report by Asian Pacific Human Development

Pakistan is among the most vulnerable countries facing climate-related risks revealed an Asia-Pacific Human Development report launched. The report further suggested the Asia-Pacific region must continue to grow economically to lift millions out of poverty but it must also respond to changes in climate to survive. The report claimed and added that countries of the developing Asia-Pacific were much less locked into the old, carbon-intensive ways of production and consumption. The report argued that in the face of climate change, countries in Asia and the Pacific “will need to change the way they manufacture goods, raise crops and livestock, and generate energy. This would mean moving to greener, more resilient, lower emission options that not only sustain the environment but also offer opportunities to the poor for employment and income. The Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Mohammad Javed Malik reiterated the recommendations of the strategic documents and said they must be translated into concrete action and should form an integral part of the human development agenda in Pakistan. National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) which was recently approved by the federal cabinet. The policy provides a framework to address the issues Pakistan faces vis-à-vis the phenomenon of climate change and suggests ways and means to adapt to and mitigate the ravages posed by climate change.

Dawn – May 17, 2012

After 52 Days, Army Declares Trapped Soldier Martyrs

Fifty-two days a huge wall of snow slammed into an army camp in the Giari sector of Siachen Glacier, Pakistan Army declared as martyrs 140 soldiers and civilians trapped underneath the avalanche. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), “It has been decided to declare the remaining brave soldiers as shuhada (martyrs)” to try to reduce the

families' suffering. "This is being done with mixed feelings of pride, grief and, above all, unflinching resolve to continue all-out efforts to recover the bodies of all shuhada," it added. A huge avalanche crashed into the remote Siachen Glacier base high in the mountains in the early hours of April 7, trapping 129 soldiers and 11 civilian contractors. Only three bodies have so far been recovered from the site. A search and rescue operation, launched by the army immediately after the tragedy, met relative success on its 50th day (May 27) when the body of one soldier, identified as Mohammad Hussain, was recovered. More than 450 rescuers, including foreign teams, have been working in sub-zero temperatures at the site. Rescuers have dug tunnels into the mass of snow and ice that hit the battalion headquarters of the 6th Northern Light Infantry to try to recover the bodies. The site is 13,000 feet up in the mountains, just below the glacier where Pakistani and Indian troops have faced off since the 1980s.

The Express Tribune - May 30, 2012

Food Insecurity

Wheat Procurement to Begin from 5th: Rawalpindi Division

Wheat procurement in Rawalpindi Division will be started from May 5 while the supply of the gunny bags (bardana) to the farmers has been started said Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Amdad Ullah Bosal. He said that 12 centers have been set up in four districts of Rawalpindi division for the procurement of 5000 metric tones wheat which would be purchased from the farmers.

- Rawalpindi
- Jhelum
- Chakwal
- Attock

He said that food department Rawalpindi would procure wheat on subsidized rate of Rs 1,050 per 40 kilograms on wheat purchase centers set up for this purpose. In addition to this Rs 7.50 would also be paid to the farmers as delivery charges on 100 KG wheat. Bardana for up to 50 bags could be obtained on personal guarantee and this would be given on first come, first serve basis. He informed that the representatives of DCO Rawalpindi would also be present on wheat procurement centers to look after the procurement process and to facilitate the farmers. He said that procurement process of wheat would be completed in a transparent manner in accordance with the policy of the Punjab Government. The complaints of the farmers in this connection would be addressed at the spot by a committee which would also have the representatives of the farmers. The procurement centers for district Rawalpindi have been set up in tehsil Gujar Khan and tehsil Taxila while the focal persons for these centers would be Assistant Commissioners. The government has set 1,000 metric tons target for Rawalpindi district. The growers would be provided all possible facilities with full payment of the support price of their produce.

Pakistan Today - May 08, 2012

Inflation Soars To Eight Month High

The increase in fuel prices have stoked inflation which clocked in at 11.3% in April, the highest level in eight months, according to the latest official statistics. Consumer Price Index – a key indicator of inflation – increased to 11.27% in April over the corresponding month last year. The impact of increase in energy prices have started appearing in the index and also surged the monthly jump by 1.83% in April over March – the highest in 14 months. The last time there was such a massive monthly jump was in September 2010 when it rose 2.1% due to the devastating floods that choked

the food supply chain in the country. The chain reaction of fuel price increasing transportation charges also became one of main factors in resurgence of inflationary pressure. There was an increase of 18.4% in prices of housing water, electricity, gas and other fuel groups in April over a year ago, according to statistics released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The group has 29.41% weight in overall CPI basket. The transport group prices, having 7.2% weight in CPI basket, increased 28.8% in the same period. Despite resurgence the government will be able to achieve its annual average inflation target of 12%, as average inflation during the first ten months, July 2011 to April 2012, remained at 19.40%. Non-food and non-energy inflation, which is exogenous to all seasonal shocks, also remained in double digits. PBS reported that core inflation – non-food and non-energy – rose to 10.8%.

GDP Rebasing Controversy Deepens

The PBS rebased the economy from 1999-00 to 2005-06 that has triggered a widespread controversy. It not only decreased the size of the economy by Rs2.5 trillion but also caused less than expected economic growth in the outgoing fiscal year. The Central Development Working Party had approved rebasing of national accounts while approving Rs283.5 million for completing the exercise. Rebasing did result in erosion in size of the economy but could not confirm whether the impact was of Rs2.5 trillion. The exercise has forced economic managers to go back to the drawing board and rework all economic indicators for the past several years in addition to current year's projections. The government once again postponed Annual Plan Coordination Committee meeting due to its inability to workout next year's targets because of GDP rebase controversy.

The Express Tribune - May 03, 2012

Wheat Release Price to Be Rs. 1,100

The Punjab government has reportedly fixed release price of wheat at Rs1, 100 per 40kg for the next season, taking a first big leap to stabilize the price that has been sliding because of reluctance of the private sector to purchase the commodity. In run-up to provincial procurement drive, rumors had gripped the market that the Punjab government had plans to keep wheat price at Rs1,000 per 40kg, at least for carry over (1.75 million tons) stocks to reap political benefit in an election year. These rumors have so far kept private sector out of purchase as it was hoping to get cheaper wheat from the official stocks rather itself buying the commodity. By fixing the price on the higher side, the Punjab government hopes to activate private sector into buying and stabilize wheat price that has so far been hovering between Rs900 to Rs950 per 40kg in different parts of the province. With new release price, the millers would now be able to calculate at what price they could afford to purchase the commodity. After all, they have to add mark-up and other incidentals they had to bear for the next six months. The higher the release price, the more millers would buy. With the existing price, which is almost Rs150 per 40 kilo lower than the new release price, the millers should come in a big way as it makes highly lucrative business proposition for them. On the second plank, the Punjab government also decided to reduce gunny bag distribution cycle from 15 to 10 days. Now, every farmer can get second installment of bags within a week. With the entire procurement campaign now reduced to even less than 25 days, against traditional 45 days, in some parts of the province as weather delayed harvesting, the food department has also reduced the gunny bag distribution cycle, hoping it can send signal for aggressive buying and keep the price stable.

Dawn - May 02, 2012

Price of 20kg Flour Bag Increases By Rs85 In Punjab: Punjab

The Punjab Flour Mills Association (PFMA) has increased the price of a 20kilogrammes (kg) bag by Rs85 or Rs4.25 per kg. The PFMA has taken the step in the wake of increase in the wheat price in the open market and the Punjab Chief Minister's decision of not allowing an increase in the flour price despite the recommendations of the committee headed by his senior adviser Zulfiqar Khosa. The association has informed the food department and the district coordination officers across the province that the ex-mill price of the 20kg bag will be Rs650 (32.5 per kg) and it will be sold to consumers at Rs675 (33.75 per kg). The PFMA chairman Abdul Jabbar has said that the government had increased the support price of wheat, for the 2011-12 crops, to Rs1, 050 per 40kg from Rs950. The official procuring agencies and the open market traders were buying grain from growers at Rs1, 050 per 40kg or 26.25 per kg. Previously, the mills were buying wheat at Rs23.75 per kg and selling flour at Rs28.25. Now, they are buying grain at Rs26.25 per kg and want to sell flour at Rs32.5. apparently they want to increase their margin from Rs4.5 per kg to Rs6.25 per kg. Abdul Jabbar said the association was demanding an ex-mill price of Rs625 for the past many months, but when the government has stopped selling wheat to flour mills and they were purchasing it from the open market, the price of the 20 kg bag of flour will be Rs650 instead of Rs565 and its retail price will be Rs675. The government established a committee under the chairmanship of Zulfiqar Khosa a few weeks ago, that tried to convince the flour mill owners to defer increasing flour price till the end of Ramadan. The provincial government wanted to avoid public backlash.

The Express Tribune - May 18, 2012

Punjab Stops Wheat Procurement at 2.9 Million Ton: Punjab

The Punjab concluded its wheat procurement drive at less than 2.9 million ton, which is more than 0.6 million ton short of its declared target of 3.5 million ton and 1.1 million ton less than what it had arrangements for (4 million ton). The farmers termed the falling short of target a "departmental design," which was carefully crafted to terminate the campaign well short of three million ton. However, the department blames it at the small crop size - "far less than the projections made by the farmers and the Agriculture Department." By falling short of the target, the Punjab government saves around Rs18 billion out of Rs92 billion, which it had arranged for 3.5 million ton. Given the provincial financial crunch, it is a huge saving, but came with a price tag; farmers crying foul both on price and purchase. "All the farmers' bodies agreed that the price sustained at around Rs950 per 40kg, or Rs1, 000 per 40kg than officially declared price of Rs1, 050 per maund," says an official of Farmers Associates Pakistan (FAP). The price decrease came because of official policies. The farmers faced double jeopardy; they had a small window of 15 to 20 days to sell their crop, which had been delayed by weather for 20 days - squeezing the harvesting and sale time. On the other hand, they also knew right from the beginning that the Food Department would end its purchase much before three million ton figure. Thus they had no option but to throw their crop at whatever price they got, and got almost 10 per cent less than official price.

Dawn - May 30, 2012

Commodity Prices Decline

Commodities	18 May	25 May	Difference	Percentage
Wheat Flour (Atta-100 Kg bag)	2600.00	2600.00	0.00	0.00
Super basmati 50Kg	6000.00	5750.00	250.00	-4.17
Basmati 386 Kg	3250.00	3250.00	0.00	0.00
Masur 50Kg	3350.00	3200.00	150.00	-4.35
Moon 50Kg	5750.00	5500.00	250.00	-4.35
Mash 50Kg	4400.00	4200.00	200.00	-4.55
Gram Pulse 50Kg	4900.00	4600.00	300.00	-6.12
Sugar 50Kg	2550.00	2540.00	10.00	-0.39
Irri 6 (50Kg)	1900.00	1900.00	0.00	0.00
Palm Olien (per maund)	5050.00	5050.00	0.00	0.00
RBD Palm Oil (per maund)	4950.00	4950.00	0.00	0.00

Dawn - May 28, 2012