

cdprIGC

Consortium For Development Policy Research

NEWSLETTER

October 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Macrodata

1.1 Trade

1.2 Balance of Payments

1.3 Prices

1.4 Energy

1.5 Air Quality

2 Insights for Change

2.1 Pakistan's Air Pollution Crisis: A Call for Sustained Action

3 Policy Analysis

3.1 Meritocracy in a Bureaucracy

4 Let's Talk Development

4.1 How to deliver economic growth in an uncertain world?

5 Fellows' Articles

5.1 Hadia Majid
The Decision to Work

6.2 Umair Javed
AI and Human Learning

6.3 Ghazan Jamal
Flawed Deportation Policy

MACRO DATA

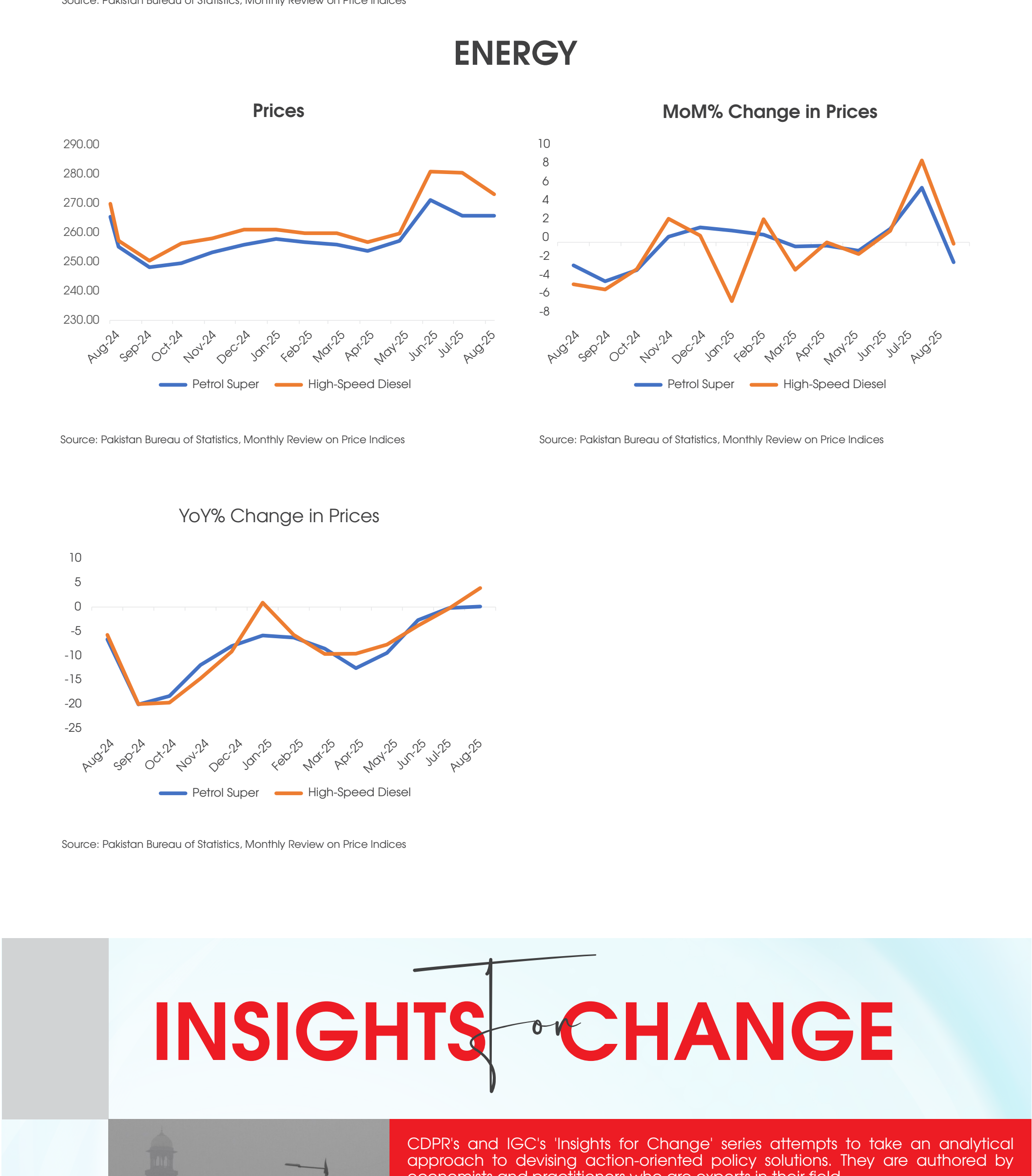
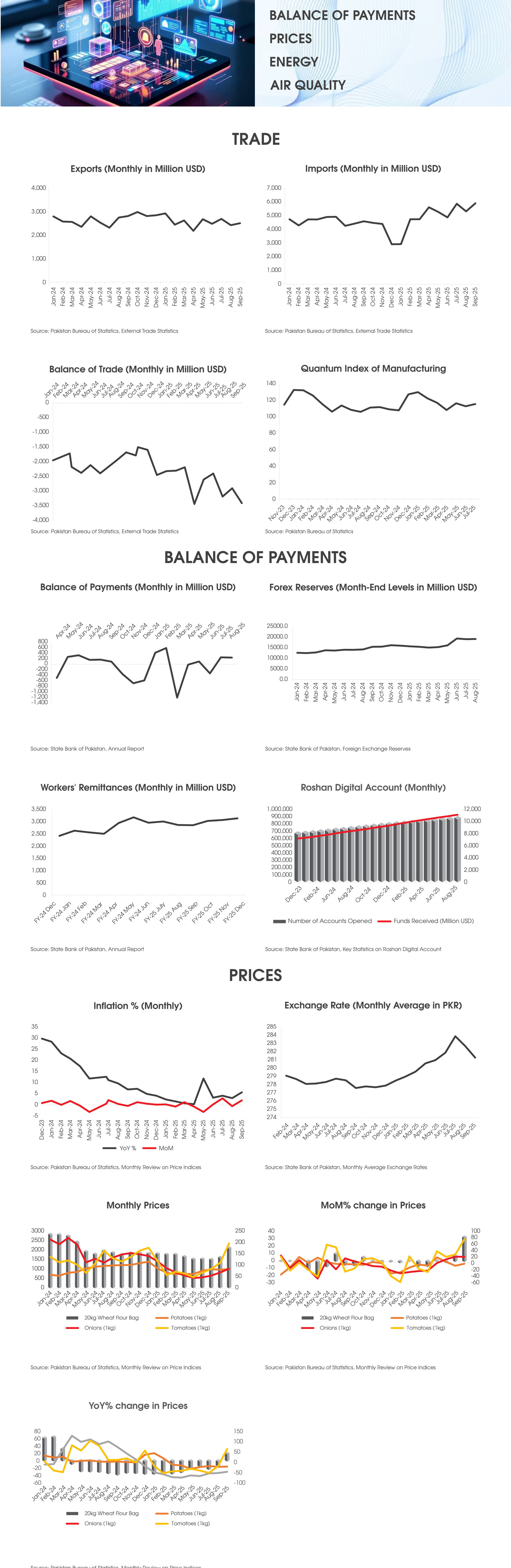
TRADE

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

PRICES

ENERGY

AIR QUALITY



INSIGHTS for CHANGE

CDPR's and IGC's 'Insights for Change' series attempts to take an analytical approach to devising action-oriented policy solutions. They are authored by economists and practitioners who are experts in their field.

Pakistan's Air Pollution Crisis: A Call for Sustained Action

Pakistan faces one of the world's worst air pollution crises, with cities like Lahore recording hazardous PM2.5 levels year-round. Despite decades of environmental legislation, weak enforcement and fragmented institutions have left citizens exposed to toxic air that shortens life expectancy by up to 7.5 years in some regions. The issue is not seasonal but systemic, rooted in poor urban planning, unchecked vehicular emissions, industrial inefficiency and unsustainable agricultural practices. This article explores the structural causes of Pakistan's air pollution and argues that while short-term "band-aid" measures such as school closures or artificial rain offer little relief, the path to cleaner air lies in long-term, cross-sectoral reforms. Strengthening environmental institutions, enforcing emission standards, incentivizing cleaner transport and farming technologies and mobilizing civil society are all crucial steps.

This article is written by Sarwal Nasim (Assistant Professor of Economics, Colby College).

POLICY ANALYSIS

Meritocracy in a Bureaucracy

In a system often associated with limited transparency and entrenched patronage, new research by Shan Aman Rana offers a surprising finding: discretion in Pakistan's bureaucracy can, under certain conditions, promote meritocracy. Focusing on the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), one of the country's most influential civil service cadres, the study uses hand-collected data on officers' careers, tax performance and professional networks to examine how promotions are determined.

The results show that senior bureaucrats are more likely to promote high-performing juniors based on ability rather than personal ties even in a high-corruption environment. The paper identifies specific institutional and incentive conditions that make merit-based promotions more likely, suggesting that well-structured discretion rather than rigid rules alone can strengthen governance and improve outcomes in developing-country bureaucracies.

Let's Talk DEVELOPMENT

Season 3 - Episode 5:
How to deliver economic growth in an uncertain world?

Host
SHAHRIKH WANI
Senior Country Manager, Zambia, International Growth Centre (IGC)

Guest
DR. ROBERTA GATTI
Chief Economist, World Bank, Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan & Pakistan (MENAAP)

FELLOWS' ARTICLES

Umair Javed
AI and Human Learning

Hadia Majid
The Decision to Work

Ghazan Jamal
Flawed Deportation Policy

LET'S TALK DEVELOPMENT

CDPR and IGC's podcast series called 'Let's Talk Development' is about understanding Pakistan's crucial economic and development problems. With support from the International Growth Centre (IGC), CDPR disseminates policy briefs, hosts events, engages with the media and produces digital content to make topics in development research such as economic growth, energy, education, health and governance intelligible to both decision makers & the public.

CONTENTS OF LAST MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

1 Macrodata

1.1 Trade

1.2 Balance of Payments

1.3 Prices

1.4 Energy

1.5 Air Quality

2 Insights for Change

2.1 Responding to Pakistan Floods

3 Policy Analysis

3.1 Job Search Behaviour and Access to References on a Job-matching Platform in Pakistan

4 Let's Talk Development

4.1 Unlocking Pakistan's Youth Potential: How to develop a skilled workforce

5 Events

5.1 G'IMI ILC/Path2Dev/BREAD Conference on Development Economics

6 Fellows' Articles

6.1 Ishrat Husain
Reviving The Rural Economy

6.2 Umair Javed
Regional Political Upheavals

6.3 Ali Cheema
Rote Learning is Failing Us, One Teacher's Legacy Shows a Better Way

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