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SHAHID LEGAL GROUP

SLD NEWS UPDATES

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FBR CLARIFIES SALES TAX RULES FOR FOOTWEAR SOLD THROUGH POS RETAILERS

Written by

Faisal Shahnawaz

in

Taxation

Sales Tax General Order No. 11 of 2026 provides implementation guidelines for footwear supplied through FBR digitally integrated and POS-compliant retail outlets.

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has issued Sales Tax General Order (STGO) No. 11 of 2026 to clarify the implementation of Serial No. 65 of the Third Schedule to the Sales Tax Act, 1990, providing certainty on the sales tax treatment of footwear supplied through FBR digitally integrated and Point of Sale (POS)-compliant retailers.

The General Order, effective from July 1, 2026, addresses implementation and interpretation issues raised by the Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association (PFMA) following amendments introduced through the Finance Act, 2026.

FBR clarifies footwear taxation

Under Section 3(2)(a) of the Sales Tax Act, 1990, sales tax on goods listed in the Third Schedule is generally charged on the basis of the retail price.

The Finance Act, 2026 inserted Serial No. 65 into the Third Schedule, bringing footwear of all types within the retail price-based taxation regime, except where manufacturers exclusively sell their products through their own FBR digitally integrated and POS-compliant retail outlets.

Following the amendment, the PFMA approached the FBR seeking clarification on practical and interpretational issues concerning the application of the new provisions.

Documented supply chains remain outside retail price regime

After reviewing the matter, the FBR observed that supplies made through documented and digitally verifiable supply chains, including transactions involving POS-integrated retailers, are fully traceable under the tax system.

The Board noted that footwear manufacturers supplying products to independent brand owners operating FBR digitally integrated and POS-compliant retail outlets generally do not determine the final retail price, as pricing decisions are made by retailers in accordance with prevailing commercial practices.

According to the FBR, the legislative intent behind Serial No. 65 is achieved so long as transactions remain within a documented and electronically verifiable supply chain.

Implementation Matrix issued

To ensure consistent application of the amended provisions, the FBR has issued an Implementation Matrix as part of STGO No. 11 of 2026.

Under the new framework:

• Registered manufacturers selling footwear through their own FBR digitally integrated and POS-compliant retail outlets will remain outside the retail price-based taxation regime under Serial No. 65. Sales tax will instead be charged on the value of supply as defined in Section 2(46) of the Sales Tax Act, 1990.

• Imports of footwear covered under Serial No. 65 will continue to attract sales tax on a value equal to 130 per cent of the value determined under Section 25 of the Customs Act, 1969, inclusive of applicable customs duties and Federal Excise Duty.

• Supplies made by importers to registered manufacturers or FBR digitally integrated and POS-compliant retailers will follow the same valuation mechanism.

• Footwear imported directly by FBR digitally integrated and POS-compliant retailers for sale to end consumers will also be taxed under the same framework.

• Supplies by digitally integrated registered manufacturers or registered importers to registered corporate entities, federal and provincial government departments, autonomous bodies and statutory organisations for their own use will likewise remain subject to the same basis for the levy and collection of sales tax.

Uniform implementation across Pakistan

The FBR has directed all Chief Commissioners Inland Revenue to ensure the strict, consistent and uniform implementation of the General Order across their respective jurisdictions.

The Board further stated that any issues relating to the interpretation or implementation of the order should be referred to the Inland Revenue (Policy Wing) for clarification.

Tax experts said the clarification is expected to remove uncertainty surrounding the taxation of footwear supplied through documented retail channels. They noted that the order supports the government’s broader objective of promoting digital documentation, improving tax compliance and encouraging retail businesses to operate through FBR-integrated POS systems.

FBR SLAPS UP TO 92% FED ON IMPORTED VEHICLES IN PAKISTAN FOR FY2026-27

Written by

Faisal Shahnawaz

in

Automotive, Taxation

New federal excise duty rates target imported cars, SUVs, and luxury vehicles with engine capacities above 2,000cc under the updated tax framework.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has imposed a federal excise duty (FED) of up to 92 percent on imported vehicles in Pakistan for the fiscal year 2026-27, significantly increasing the tax burden on high-engine-capacity cars and sport utility vehicles (SUVs).

The revised rates have been incorporated into the Federal Excise Act, 2005, as amended up to June 30, 2026.

The updated taxation measures form part of the government's broader strategy to regulate imports, enhance revenue collection, and discourage the influx of luxury vehicles into the country.

According to the revised provisions, imported motor cars, SUVs, and other passenger vehicles falling under Pakistan Customs Tariff heading 87.03 will be subject to higher excise duties based on engine displacement.

The measures apply to vehicles primarily designed for transporting passengers, including electric vehicles with four wheels, station wagons, double-cabin 4×4 pickup trucks, and racing cars. Auto rickshaws remain exempt from the new FED structure.

Under the latest schedule, imported vehicles with engine capacities of 2,000cc and above but not exceeding 3,000cc will attract an 86 percent ad valorem federal excise duty. Meanwhile, imported vehicles with engine capacities exceeding 3,000cc will be subject to an even steeper 92 percent ad valorem FED.

The move is expected to substantially increase the landed cost of imported luxury and premium vehicles, making them significantly more expensive for consumers.

Industry experts believe the enhanced duty rates could reduce demand for imported high-end vehicles while encouraging buyers to consider locally assembled alternatives and hybrid models available in Pakistan.

The government has increasingly relied on taxation measures to manage the country's import bill and support domestic manufacturing. The latest FED revision aligns with these objectives by imposing higher taxes on imported vehicles that generally fall within the premium and luxury segments of the automotive market.

Automobile industry stakeholders are closely monitoring the impact of the new duty structure on vehicle imports, dealership operations, and consumer purchasing behavior. Analysts suggest the higher tax rates may reshape Pakistan's imported vehicle market during FY2026-27, particularly for SUVs and luxury vehicles equipped with larger engines.

FBR ANNOUNCES MAJOR TRANSFERS, POSTINGS OF IRS OFFICERS IN BS-19 TO BS-22

Written by

Faisal Shahnawaz

in

Taxation

Senior Inland Revenue Service officers reassigned across FBR headquarters, tax offices, and directorates nationwide with immediate effect.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has notified the transfers and postings of senior officers of the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) in grades BS-19 to BS-22 with immediate effect and until further orders.

The reshuffle covers key positions at FBR headquarters, regional tax offices, corporate tax offices, large taxpayers offices, and various directorates across the country.

According to the notification issued on July 17, 2026, Ms. Saadia Sadaf Gilani (BS-22) has been transferred from Member (Audit/CRM), FBR Headquarters Islamabad, and posted as Member (Taxpayers Services), FBR Headquarters Islamabad.

Ms. Tehmina Aamer (BS-22), currently serving as Director General of the Inland Revenue Service Academy Lahore, has been posted as Director General of the Directorate General of Anti Benami Initiative, Islamabad, stationed at Lahore. She will assume the charge after the retirement of Syed Nadeem Hussain Rizvi on August 6, 2026.

Among BS-21 officers, Ms. Amina Hassan has been moved from Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue, Regional Tax Office Rawalpindi, to Chief Commissioner, Corporate Tax Office Islamabad.

Ms. Nabila Faran Baig has been transferred from Director General, Directorate General of Internal Audit (Inland Revenue), Islamabad, to Member (Audit/CRM), FBR Headquarters Islamabad.

Mr. Faheem Mohammad has been posted as Chief Commissioner, Regional Tax Office Sargodha, while Mr. Faridullah Jan Khan has been assigned as Chief Commissioner, Regional Tax Office Islamabad. Ms. Aisha Farooq has been posted as Chief, FBR Headquarters Islamabad.

The notification also includes transfers of several BS-20 officers. Mr. Sajjad Akbar Khan has been posted as Chief Commissioner (OPS), Regional Tax Office Rawalpindi, while Ms. Farhat Qayum has been assigned as Director General (OPS), Directorate General of Internal Audit (Inland Revenue), Islamabad.

Mr. Adnan Inamullah Khan has been transferred as Director General (OPS), IT&DT, FBR Headquarters Islamabad, and Mr. Muhammad Yasir Pirzada has been posted as Commissioner (Zone-V), Medium Taxpayers Office Karachi.

Other notable BS-20 transfers include Mr. Hazoor Bux Laghari, Ms. Naureen Yaqub, Mr. Abdul Khalique Shaikh, Ms. Yasmeen Fatima, Mr. Adnan Ahmad Khan, Mr. Munir Sadiq, Mr. Irfan Ali, Mr. Javed Iqbal Sheikh, Ms. Attiya Ali Khan, Mr. Waqas Aslam, Mr. Muhammad Nawaz, Ms. Shabana Aziz, Mr. Imran Hayee Khan, Mr. Muhammad Zaheer Qureshi, Mr. Muhammad Akbar Mahar, Mian Muhammad Majid Hayat, Mr. Naveed Dost Chandio, Mr. Wali Muhammad Shaikh, Mr. Riaz Muhammad, Ms. Fakhryia Anjum, Mr. Hayat Muhammad, Mr. Hameed-ur-Rehman, Mr. Amir Rehman, Ms. Bushra Jaffar, and Mr. Naveed Ahmad, who have been assigned to various positions in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Sukkur, Faisalabad, Quetta, and Multan.

The reshuffle further covers BS-19 officers, including Mr. Shahid Sattar, Mr. Muhammad Aslam Jamro, Mr. Ashfaq Ahmed Awan, Mr. Shehzad Mehmood, Mr. Muhammad Jawad, Mr. Abdul Wahid Shar, Mr. Mazhar Irshad Khan, Mr. Azhar Jehangir, Mr. Muhammad Bilal, Mr. Mumtaz Ali Thebo, Mr. Nisar Ahmed Burki, Mr. Rais Humayun Abdul Hayee, Mr. Mukhtiar Ahmad Shar, Syed Arsalan Qudus Bukhari, and Mr. Muhammad Qasswar Hussain.

These officers have been assigned new responsibilities across regional tax offices, large taxpayers offices, corporate tax offices, and legal and enforcement wings of the FBR.

The FBR stated that officers currently drawing performance allowance will continue to receive the allowance at their new places of posting.

The transferred officers have also been directed to submit charge relinquishment and assumption reports immediately after taking over their new assignments for record and further administrative action.

FBR EMPOWERED TO SEIZE UNPAID DUTY CIGARETTES AND BEVERAGES

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

Taxation

Updated law allows confiscation of counterfeit products, untaxed goods and vehicles used for transportation

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has been empowered to seize cigarettes, beverages and other excisable goods on which federal excise duty has not been paid, under the updated Federal Excise Act, 2005, revised up to June 30, 2026.

The amended provisions strengthen the tax authority's enforcement powers against illicit trade, counterfeit products and duty-evaded goods by allowing the seizure of items manufactured, transported or sold in violation of excise laws.

FBR authorised to seize untaxed excisable goods

According to the revised Federal Excise Act, counterfeit cigarettes and beverages produced unlawfully, along with other dutiable goods on which excise duty has not been paid as required under the law and relevant rules, will be liable to seizure.

The provisions also cover goods that fail to comply with mandatory identification and tracking requirements.

Authorities can confiscate products found without:

Tax stamps

Bar codes

Banderols

Stickers

Labels

Other prescribed tracking marks

The measure also applies to counterfeit versions of these identification features under Section 45A of the Federal Excise Act.

Goods without monitoring systems face action

The updated law further allows seizure of products that are required to be monitored through a production monitoring system but are manufactured, produced, transported, removed or handled without following the prescribed tracking mechanism.

The FBR has also been granted authority to seize vehicles or other conveyances used for the movement, transportation or carriage of such goods.

Crackdown on tax evasion

The enhanced enforcement powers are aimed at reducing revenue losses caused by the production and supply of duty-evaded excisable products.

Officials said the measures would improve documentation and strengthen monitoring across sectors vulnerable to tax evasion, particularly the tobacco and beverage industries.

The FBR has increasingly expanded the use of digital tracking systems, tax stamps and enforcement measures to ensure compliance with federal excise regulations and prevent the circulation of illicit products.

Strengthening excise duty enforcement

The revised provisions form part of broader tax administration reforms aimed at improving transparency, increasing revenue collection and discouraging illegal manufacturing and distribution networks.

By allowing the seizure of unpaid duty goods and related transportation vehicles, the government expects stronger enforcement of excise laws and improved compliance among manufacturers and suppliers.

FBR MANDATES TAX STAMPS ON EXCISABLE GOODS UNDER UPDATED FEDERAL EXCISE ACT

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

Taxation

Updated Federal Excise Act requires manufacturers to use tax stamps and digital tracking before goods enter the market

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has made it mandatory for manufacturers to affix tax stamps and other prescribed tracking features on excisable goods before they are removed from factories or offered for sale, under the updated Federal Excise Act, 2005, revised up to June 30, 2026.

The revised law strengthens the FBR's authority to monitor the production, clearance and sale of excisable goods through electronic tracking and digital verification systems, as the government seeks to improve tax compliance and curb revenue leakage.

FBR empowered to introduce digital monitoring

Under the amended provisions, the FBR may, through a notification published in the official Gazette, specify any registered person, class of registered persons, or category of goods and services that will be subject to monitoring or tracking by electronic or other prescribed means.

The law provides that, from a date to be notified by the Board, no excisable goods may be removed from a manufacturing facility or sold unless they carry the prescribed tax stamp or approved tracking mechanism.

The measure is designed to ensure that products subject to Federal Excise Duty (FED) are properly documented and traceable throughout the supply chain.

Multiple tracking technologies allowed

The updated legislation allows the FBR to prescribe various monitoring technologies, including:

Tax stamps

Banderols

Stickers

Labels

Barcodes

Production monitoring systems

Video analytics

Other electronic or digital tracking technologies specified by the Board

Officials said the flexible framework enables the tax authority to adopt modern technologies to improve oversight of excisable goods.

Manufacturers to obtain stamps from authorised suppliers

The law also requires registered manufacturers to obtain tax stamps and tracking devices only from licensed suppliers authorised by the FBR.

This requirement is intended to standardise the implementation of the track-and-trace system and prevent the use of counterfeit or unauthorised tax stamps.

Manufacturers covered under the notified categories will be responsible for ensuring compliance before excisable goods are cleared for distribution or sale.

Part of broader tax reforms

The mandatory tax stamp regime forms part of the FBR's broader tax administration reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, improving documentation and strengthening enforcement of federal excise laws.

In recent years, the tax authority has expanded the use of digital monitoring systems and track-and-trace technology across multiple sectors to combat tax evasion, facilitate real-time monitoring of production and sales, and increase revenue collection.

The updated provisions are expected to improve compliance by ensuring excisable goods are electronically tracked before entering the market, reducing opportunities for underreporting and illicit trade.

Markets / Cotton & Textile

COTTON SPOT RATE INCREASED BY RS300 TO RS18,500/MAUND

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: The Spot Rate Committee of the Karachi Cotton Association (KCA) on Friday increased the spot rate by Rs 300 per maund and closed it at Rs 18,500 per maund.

Cotton Analyst Naseem Usman told BUSINESS RECORDER that the rate of cotton in Sindh is in between Rs18,300 to Rs 18,400 per maund ,while Phutti in the province is trading between Rs 8,800 to Rs 9,300 per 40 kilograms. In Punjab, cotton rates stand between Rs18,800 to Rs 19,000 per maund, with Phutti fetching between Rs 9,000to Rs 9,800 per 40 kilograms. The rate of cotton in Balochistan is in between Rs 18,300 to Rs 18,400 per maund. The rate of Phutti is in between Rs 9,200 to Rs 9,800 per 40 kg.

Business & Finance / Money & Banking

HABIB METROPOLITAN BANK ANNOUNCES PLS PROFIT RATES

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

By Press Release

KARACHI: Following are the rates of Profit on various types of PLS Deposit for the period of six months ended June 30,2026 declared by Habib Metropolitan Bank Limited, Head Office, Karachi.

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                Jan 01,2026 to             May 01,2026 to
                Apr 30,2026                  Jun 30, 2026

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Saving Deposit –

Individuals only 9.00% 10.00%

Saving Deposit – Financial Inst.,PSE

& Pubic Limited Co. 7.50% 8.50%

Habib Metro

Multiplier Accounts 9.00% 10.00%

Habib Metro Asaan

Account – Saving 9.00% 10.00%

Asaan Digital

Savings Account 9.00% 10.00%

Asaan Digital Remittance

Saving Account 9.00% 10.00%

Freelancer Digital

Saving Account 9.00% 10.00%

Habib Metro Ladies Savings

Account 9.00% 10.00%

Habib Metro Rozana Munafa

Savings Account 9.00% 10.00%

Roshan Digital Account (NRP

RupeeValue

Account-Saving) 9.00% 10.00%

Sohni Dharti Remittance Saving

Account (Half Yearly) — 10.00%

Sohni Dharti Remittance Saving

Account (Half Yearly) – Digi 10.00%

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                Jan 01,2026 to              May 01,2026 to
                Apr 30,2026                   Jun 30, 2026

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Habib Metro Saving Plus

Account – Individuals only

Upto Rs. 250,000/- 9.00% 10.00%

Over Rs. 250,000/- 9.00% 10.00%

Habib Metro

Privilege 55 Plus 9.50% 10.50%

Habib Metro Junior

Saver Accounts 9.00% 10.00%

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                Jan 01,2026 to                  Jun 08,2026
                Jun 07,2026                   Jun 30, 2026

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SNTD

7 days 9.00% 10.00%

30 days and over 9.00% 10.00%

Term/Fixed Deposits

1 Month 9.00% 10.00%

3 Months 9.15% 10.25%

6 Months 9.40% 10.50%

1 Year 10.00% 11.50%

2 Years 10.10% 11.75%

3 Years 10.25% 12.00%

4 Years 10.35% 11.80%

5 Years 10.50% 11.90%

Habib Metro Izafa Certificate

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                Jan 01,2026 to                      Jun 08,2026
                Jun 07,2026                        Jun 30, 2026

=========================================================================

                10.00%                                   10.00%
                (7 Years)                             (7 Years)
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Habib Metro Bharpoor Munafa Scheme

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                Jan 01,2026 to                      Jun 08,2026
                Jun 07,2026                        Jun 30, 2026

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                9.50%                                    11.50%
                (1 Year)                               (1 Year)
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Habib Metro Mahana Scheme

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               Jan 01,2026 to                Jun 08,2026
               Jun 07,2026                  Jun 30, 2026
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1 Year 9.50% 11.00%

2 Years 9.65% 11.15%

3 Years 9.80% 11.38%

4 Years 9.90% 11.20%

5 Years 10.05% 11.30%

Habib Metro Premium Deposit Scheme

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               Jul 01,2025 to                Jun 08,2026
               Jun 07,2026                      30, 2026
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       QTR         HY          YR           QTR         HY              YR
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1 Year 9.65% 9.76% 10.00% 11.05% 11.20% 1.50%

2 Years 9.74% 9.86% 10.10% 11.25% 11.45% 11.75%

3 Years 9.90% 10.00% 10.25% 11.50% 11.65% 12.00%

4 Years 9.95% 10.10% 10.35% 11.30% 11.45% 11.80%

5 Years 10.10% 10.25% 10.50% 11.40% 11.55 11.90% —PR

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SCP RECOGNISED BY EUROMONEY AS 'PAKISTAN'S BEST MORTGAGE BANK'

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

KARACHI: Standard Chartered Pakistan has been recognised by Euromoney as Pakistan's Best Mortgage Bank, reflecting the strength of its mortgage proposition and commitment to delivering a seamless, client-focused home financing experience.

This recognition reinforces Standard Chartered's broader Wealth proposition, which is centred on helping clients build, manage and protect wealth throughout their financial journey. Home ownership remains one of the most important pillars of long-term financial security, and the Bank continues to combine tailored mortgage solutions with holistic financial planning and advisory services for its clients.

This accolade comes at a time when expanding access to housing remains an important national priority. As Pakistan advances initiatives aimed at increasing home ownership, including the Government of Pakistan's Wazir-e-Azam Apna Ghar Programme - Ghar Ho Tu Apna, access to financing will play a critical role in expanding home ownership, supporting economic development and building long-term financial resilience.

Standard Chartered's mortgage proposition is designed to help clients navigate the home ownership journey with confidence, offering competitive financing solutions, digital convenience and end-to-end support. Through its Future Focused Move platform, the Bank continues to support both local clients and overseas Pakistanis in achieving their housing aspirations.

Commenting on the recognition, Saadya Riaz, Head of Wealth and Retail Banking, SCP, said: "As Pakistan continues to prioritise greater access to housing, we remain committed to helping individuals and families realise their home ownership aspirations while building lasting financial well-being.

"We are honoured to be recognised by Euromoney as Pakistan's Best Mortgage Bank. At Standard Chartered, we view home ownership as more than a financial milestone; it is one of the most important foundations of long-term wealth creation. This award reflects the trust our clients place in us and the dedication of our teams to delivering exceptional service and trusted advice."

INDIA'S RBL BANK POSTS HIGHER PROFIT ON STRONG LOAN GROWTH

- Net interest income, the difference between interest earned on advances and paid on deposits, grew 12% to 16.54 billion rupees

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 12 hours ago

BENGALURU: India's RBL Bank reported an increase in its first-quarter profit on Friday, driven by robust loan growth, particularly in the corporate banking segment.

The company's quarterly net profit rose 27% over the year earlier to 2.54 billion rupees ($26.38 million).

Net interest income, the difference between interest earned on advances and paid on deposits, grew 12% to 16.54 billion rupees.

Indian lenders saw strong credit growth during the quarter as corporate borrowing picked up and demand for personal loans, gold loans and small-business financing remained resilient.

RBL Bank's net advances grew 23% over the year earlier, with wholesale advances, including corporate loans, surging 38%.

India's Federal Bank flags 1.5-2% of net worth hit from new RBI norms

Its net interest margin shrunk to 4.13% from 4.41% in the preceding three-month period.

Last month, Emirates NBD Bank completed its acquisition of a 60% stake in the lender, marking one of the largest cross-border deals in India's financial sector.

INDIA'S FEDERAL BANK FLAGS 1.5-2% OF NET WORTH HIT FROM NEW RBI NORMS

- Net profit stood at 11.77 billion Indian rupees in April-June quarter

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

MUMBAI: Blackstone-backed Federal Bank this fiscal year expects an additional provisioning hitof around 1.5%-2% of its net worth due to the transition to a central bank-mandated framework to cover potential loan losses, the bank said on Friday.

The additional provisioning hit would be based on the bank's net worth as of 31 March 2026, which is around 387 billion rupees ($4.02 billion); the expected credit loss framework is effective April 1, 2027.

Net profit stood at 11.77 billion rupees in April-June quarter.

Net interest income or core income at 29.46 billion rupees. Gross non-performing assets as a percentage of total assets at 1.52%.

Bank expects credit growth in mid-teens during fiscal year 2027. Loan book grew 15% year-on-year at 2.77 trillion rupees in first quarter.

Indian state-run banks estimate $30bn flow from overseas deposit scheme, sources say

Plans to offer 8-10x leverage to non-resident Indian customers under the FCNR(B) deposit scheme.

The bank plans to use FCNR (B) deposit inflow to partly refinance its existing wholesale deposit book.

Post results, Federal Bank's stock closed 6.7% higher at 348.80 rupees per share.

INDIAN STATE-RUN BANKS ESTIMATE $30BN FLOW FROM OVERSEAS DEPOSIT SCHEME, SOURCES SAY

- The state-run banks have given estimates about the quantum of dollars each of them will be able to garner through the tenor of this scheme

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

MUMBAI: Indian state-run lenders have told senior government officials they expect to raise nearly $30 billion through the central bank's subsidised dollar deposit window, five bankers familiar with the matter told *Reuters*.

The estimate was shared by the heads of state-run banks at a meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and other finance ministry officials earlier this week, two of the sources said.

"The state-run banks have given estimates about the quantum of dollars each of them will be able to garner through the tenor of this scheme," one of the bankers directly aware of the matter said.

"The larger ones have estimated inflows of around $4-$5 billion, while the smaller banks will try and target $1-$2 billion."

The bankers requested anonymity as the matters were discussed privately. The Finance Ministry did not reply to a *Reuters* email seeking comment.

On June 5, the RBI had announced a zero-cost foreign-exchange swap facility for deposits raised from non-resident Indians, allowing banks to offer higher returns on such deposits. The scheme closes on September 30.

India draws nearly $10 billion under RBI's deposit drive to support Indian rupee, sources say

Earlier this week, *Reuters* reported citing sources familiar with the matter that India has attracted roughly $10 billion in inflows through the central bank's special deposit programme.

The funds raised so far represent only a fraction of the total inflows that were estimated between $40 billion to $70 billion by analysts.

"The start has been slow, but we are confident of garnering $2 billion under this scheme till September, with major flows coming from the gulf and Singapore," said Binod Kumar, managing director and CEO at Indian Bank, that has raised about $150 million so far.

On June 23, the central bank clarified that banks would be allowed to lend against these deposits and place a lien against them, permitting the use of leverage that can make the programme more attractive.

Inflows have picked up since then, but officials are expecting a majority of the flows to be back-ended, imitating what was seen in 2013, three of the five bankers said.

RECORD REMITTANCES FAIL TO OFFSET IMPORT SURGE AS PAKISTAN POSTS $139MN C/A DEFICIT IN FY26

- Pakistan's external account was pushed into negative due to high imports, while exports remained stagnant in FY26

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 14 hours ago

Pakistan's current account recorded a marginal deficit of $139 million in FY26, reversing a surplus of $1.84 billion in the previous fiscal year, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Friday.

Despite record workers' remittances, Pakistan's external account was pushed into negative due to high imports, while exports remained largely stagnant during the outgoing fiscal year.

Earlier, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad projected the current account would remain balanced or in surplus for the second consecutive fiscal year, i.e. FY26, paving the way for an increase in economic activities and growth in the ongoing fiscal year.

"I am quite confident that June numbers will also be good. So, overall, we are expecting the current account balanced or slightly in surplus for FY26," the central bank chief said while speaking at the Pakistan Banking Summit 2026.

The deterioration in the C/A was largely driven by a widening trade gap.

During FY26, Pakistan's exports of goods and services clocked in at $40.88 billion, compared with $40.79 billion in FY25, reflecting a rise of just 0.2%.

Meanwhile, imports of goods and services climbed to $76.39 billion during the fiscal year from $70.43 billion a year earlier, an increase of nearly 8.5%.

Workers' remittances reached a record $41.59 billion in FY26, up 8.6% from $38.3 billion received in the previous fiscal year, providing crucial support to the country's external position despite a wider trade gap.

"The main reason behind the current account deficit is the widening trade deficit, which was the highest since FY22," Sana Tawfik, Head of Research at Arif Habib Limited, told BUSINESS RECORDER.

She noted that imports picked up significantly during the fiscal year, while exports showed little to no growth and did not provide enough support. "Consequently, the weaker trade balance pushed the current account into deficit."

Meanwhile, Saad Hanif of Ismail Iqbal Securities was of the view that the headline current account figure is broadly balanced and, at around 0.03% of GDP, "is not an immediate cause for concern".

"However, the composition is less reassuring. A recovery in imports alongside contracting exports is the least favourable combination for the external account, as it suggests domestic demand is rebounding faster than the economy's ability to generate foreign exchange," he said.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Waqas Ghani, Head of Research at JS Global.

"On the surface, the current account position looks remarkably composed, but the composition of that composure is what demands scrutiny," he said.

Massive deficit in June

On a monthly basis, Pakistan posted a current account deficit of $649 million in June 2026, compared with a surplus of $500 million in May 2026. In June 2025, the country had recorded a current account surplus of $220 million.

"The monthly deficit was primarily attributable to higher imports coupled with lower workers' remittances in Jun 2026, resulting in the cumulative FY26 current account balance shifting into a modest deficit," said Topline Securities.

Saad Hanif also noted that June's current account deficit was the widest of the fiscal year, and if that pace continues into FY27, the annual deficit could widen significantly.

"That would warrant caution on the rupee and limit the SBP's scope for further monetary easing from the current policy rate of 11.5%.

"The near-balanced headline figure should therefore not be interpreted as evidence of durable external stability; rather, it reflects stability underpinned by remittances, with a sustained recovery in exports remaining critical in the new fiscal year."

During June 2026, exports of goods and services stood at $3.55 billion, compared with $3.2 billion in May 2026 and $3.3 billion in June 2025.

Imports of goods and services amounted to $7.08 billion in June 2026, compared with $6.42 billion in May 2026, while they were $5.92 billion in the corresponding month of last year.

Workers' remittances clocked in at $3.48 billion during June 2026, easing from the record $4.25 billion received in May 2026 but remaining broadly in line with the $3.4 billion received in June 2025.

The SBP's reserves stood at $18.5 billion at the end of FY26, compared with around $14.64 billion a year earlier, providing stronger external buffers amid improving macroeconomic stability.

Pakistan's REER Index

Pakistan's Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) has increased to a seven-year high of 106.44 in June 2026 compared to 106.08 in May 2026.

"This reading remains at a 7-year high and is also above the 10-year average of 102.52," said Topline Securities.

A REER above 100 means the country's exports are uncompetitive, while imports are cheaper. The situation reverses when REER stands below 100 on the index.

Meanwhile, the Nominal Effective Exchange Rate Index (NEER) increased by 0.64% MoM in June 2026 to a provisional value of 38.14 from 37.9 in May 2026.

What is REER?

As per the central bank, REER is an index of the price of a basket of goods in one country relative to the price of the same basket in that country's major trading partners.

"The prices of these baskets are expressed in the same currency using the nominal exchange rate with each trading partner. The price of each trading partner's basket is weighted by its share in imports, exports, or total foreign trade," the SBP website says.

Markets / Stocks

JAPAN'S NIKKEI SLIDES INTO CORRECTION ZONE ON TECH SELLOFF, MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

By Reuters

TOKYO: Japan's Nikkei tumbled into correction territory on Friday, as a global rout in chipmakers and an escalation in the Middle East conflict prompted investors to shun risk assets.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 sank 4.03 percent to close lower at 64,141.12, after falling as much as 6.18 percent. The index is now down 11.3 percent from its all-time high close of 72,366.34 on June 25. The broader Topix slipped 2.72 percent to 3,919.21.

The decline followed overnight losses in US equities, where technology stocks tumbled, while US economic data showed strength and corporate earnings season was robust. Hawkish remarks from Federal Reserve officials on Thursday reinforced expectations for further US rate hikes.

The Philadelphia SE Semiconductor index tumbled 4.3 percent overnight, while the US-listed shares of South Korean chipmaker SK Hynix plunged more than 13 percent.

With South Korea's market closed for a holiday, selling pressure intensified on Japan's technology market, and notably on Kioxia Holdings, said Daisuke Hashizume, a senior strategist at Daiwa Securities.

"The long-term trend for AI and data centres is unchanged, but right now investors are worried that memory chip prices can rise sustainably," Hashizume added.

WALL ST SLIDES AS CHIP SELLOFF BROADENS

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

NEW YORK: Wall Street extended its decline on Friday as a pullback on stocks associated with the AI boom, which has driven much of the gains so far this year, morphed into a larger risk-off sentiment.

Semiconductor stocks, which have led the broader market's move in recent sessions, initially led the selloff, which broadened as the session progressed.

All three indexes were on course to post weekly losses.

The Philadelphia SE Semiconductor Index was last down 1.0 percent, and remained on track for its steepest weekly loss since early April, and has tumbled about 17 percent so far in July. Even so, the index remains up 63.2 percent year-to-date, compared with the S&P 500's 10 percent gain over the same time frame. Some investors in the artificial intelligence space have begun positioning for a slowdown in the nearly trillion-dollar spending boom, with some active managers already scaling back their exposure, according to a Reuters analysis.

"The story is over for chips because the story is not over for AI," said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA Research in New York. "(Chips) have come so far, so over an extended period, it's like an army that got too far ahead of its supply lines and has to retreat and let the fundamentals catch up."

Every member of the Magnificent Seven group of AI-related megacaps dipped, with Meta and Alphabet suffering the worst of it, down 2.7 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 290.49 points, or 0.56 percent, to 52,260.46, the S&P 500 lost 64.87 points, or 0.86 percent, to 7,468.83 and the Nasdaq Composite lost 308.67 points, or 1.19 percent, to 25,573.27. Among the major sectors of the S&P 500, communication services and technology were down the most, while energy stocks were the sole gainers, benefitting from spiking crude prices amid signs of escalating hostilities in the Iran war.

War equipment makers were also clear outperformers.

Second-quarter earnings season is still in its early days, with 49 of the companies in the S&P 500 having reported. Of those, 90 percent have delivered better-than-expected results, according to LSEG.

EUROPEAN SHARES DROP AS GLOBAL TECH SELLOFF, MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT WEIGH

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

FRANKFURT: European shares fell on Friday, tracking a loss in global markets on the back of a chip-stock selloff and an escalating Middle East conflict.

Investors rushed out from highly volatile tech stocks from Japan to Europe, taking cover in sectors that have lagged so far this year, as the uncertainty over AI investments played out. Strong forecasts from AI industry leaders such as chip equipment maker ASML and Taiwan's TSMC this week did little to stem the weakness. While Japan's Nikkei confirmed a correction on the day, Wall Street's Nasdaq futures slid over 1 percent.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index was down 0.6 percent at 639.49 points by 0849 GMT and is on track to log a small weekly decline, taking its two-week loss to about 2 percent.

Europe's tech sector shed 2.3 percent and led sectoral declines, with chipstocks Soitec, ASMI and ASML dropping between 4 percent and 6 percent.

In contrast, utilities stocks rose 1.3 percent, while luxury is the best-performing sector this week.

Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank, believes this run to cover is unlikely to last.

"The rotation trade is threatened today by rising yields, rising borrowing costs and geopolitical tensions, because both smaller companies and the non-technology pockets of the market remain more vulnerable than their big technology peers," said Ozkardeskaya.

S&P 500 AND NASDAQ SLIP AS CHIP ROUT EXTENDS; NETFLIX SLIDES

- Chip stocks, broadly, extended the previous session's weakness, with heavyweight Nvidia down 1.4%

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq slipped on Friday, as investors reassessed this year's AI-fueled rally, deepening a selloff in chip stocks, while news of a new AI model from China further soured sentiment.

After a blistering run that lifted main stock indexes to record highs, investors have started to retreat from crowded semiconductor trades over worries about the scale of AI-related spending.

Chip stocks, broadly, extended the previous session's weakness, with heavyweight Nvidia down 1.4%.

This decline combined with an early gain in Apple, pushed the iPhone maker ahead of Nvidia to briefly become the world's most valuable company.

The Philadelphia SE Semiconductor index fell 1.8% and was set for its worst week since March. The gauge has shed more than 20% from its late June record high.

"It does feel very much a chip stock-driven move, just sort of hurting sentiment more broadly." Fiona Cincotta, senior markets analyst at City Index, said.

Chinese AI startup Moonshot unveiled Kimi K3, a 2.8 trillion-parameter model it said was the world's largest open-weight AI, adding to investors' concerns over whether hefty spending by heavyweights will deliver tangible results.

Wall St edges higher with earnings in focus

"The latest development is the competition from open source models in China, which raised some competitive fears," Angelo Kourkafas, senior global investment strategist at Edward Jones Investments said.

"Supposedly, there are some offerings that are rivaling the performance of Anthropic and OpenAI… potentially that is contributing today to some of that weakness that started in Asia."

All three main indexes were poised for weekly losses, as an upbeat start to second-quarter earnings and benign inflation data were overshadowed by concerns over the chip sector.

Netflix forecast third-quarter results below Wall Street estimates, sending shares of the streaming giant down 9%. The losses weighed heavily on the communication services sector, which fell 2.4%.

The CBOE Volatility Index, Wall Street's fear gauge, rose 1.30 points to 18.03 — the highest in more than a week.

At 10:10 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 4.56 points, or 0.01%, to 52,557.53, the S&P 500 lost 43.71 points, or 0.58%, to 7,490.05 and the Nasdaq Composite lost 323.79 points, or 1.25%, to 25,558.15.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq hit a three-week low earlier in the session, before cutting some losses.

Risks from the Middle East conflict continued to loom large as the United States struck bridges and an airport in Iran and Tehran responded by hitting a power and desalination plant in Kuwait.

U.S. consumer sentiment, however, increased to a five-month high in July, but that is likely temporary as the renewed U.S.-Iran tensions raises gasoline prices.

Among other movers, Intuitive Surgical shares slid nearly 11.4% after the medical device maker kept its da Vinci procedure-growth forecast unchanged and warned insurance-plan changes may be delaying patient care.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 1.24-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and by a 1.55-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

SRI LANKAN SHARES LOG THIRD STRAIGHT WEEKLY LOSS AS UTILITIES WEIGH

- CSE All-Share index settled down 0.2% at 21,405.41, ending the week 1.7% lower

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

Sri Lankan shares closed lower on Friday as losses in utilities and consumer staples stocks outweighed gains in healthcare and materials, leaving the benchmark down for a third straight week.

The CSE All-Share index settled down 0.2% at 21,405.41, ending the week 1.7% lower and bringing its losses over the past three weeks to about 4.5%.

Harischandra Mills PLC and Dialog Finance PLC were the top percentage losers on the CSE All-Share index, falling 3.63% and 3.3%, respectively.

Trading volume on the index fell to 31.9 million shares from 43.3 million in the previous session.

The equity market's turnover fell to 722.6 million Sri Lankan rupees ($2.15 million) from 1.49 billion rupees in the previous session, according to exchange data.

Foreign investors were net sellers, offloading stocks worth 123.9 million rupees, while domestic investors were net buyers, purchasing shares worth 707.2 million rupees, the data showed.

DUBAI INDEX HITS FIVE-WEEK LOW ON U.S.-IRAN ESCALATION

- Dubai's main index dropped 1.4% to a five-week low

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

Dubai's stock index declined on Friday, weighed down by financial and real estate shares, as escalating U.S.-Iran tensions rattled investor sentiments, while Abu Dhabi's index bucked the trend.

The U.S struck bridges and an airport and Tehran retaliated against U.S. bases across the Middle East. U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened to launch broad-based air strikes on Iran's infrastructure, and has also declined to rule out a ground assault on Iran's coast or islands.

U.S. officials have said attacks on southern Iran are designed in part to give Trump options.

Dubai's main index dropped 1.4% to a five-week low, dragged down by a 3.5% fall in blue-chip developer Emaar Properties and a 2.7% decline in Emirates NBD Bank.

Food delivery platform Talabat Holding slipped 0.8% after Uber said it intended to make a voluntary takeover offer for Talabat's parent, Delivery Hero.

Investor sentiment remained cautious due to the risks of escalation as ongoing tensions between the U.S. and Iran increase uncertainty, said Joseph Dahrieh, managing director at Tickmill.

"Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz also weighed on sentiment, with reduced shipping traffic through the strategic waterway raising concerns about potential impacts on trade and several sectors."

Abu Dhabi's benchmark index closed in the green after trading in negative territory for most of the session, supported by gains in banking and energy stocks.

Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, the UAE's third-largest lender, jumped 1.5%, while ADNOC Gas gained 0.9%.

Sharjah-based Dana Gas slid 1.9% after it shut down the main production facilities at Iraq's Khor Mor gas field due to credible security threats and escalating regional tensions.

Dubai's index fell 3.8%, its biggest weekly decline in more than four months, while Abu Dhabi's index logged a 1.6% weekly loss, according to LSEG data.

Oil, a key catalyst for Gulf's financial market, was up 2% at $85.87 a barrel by 1149 GMT.

ABU DHABI up 0.003% to 9,782 points
DUBAI down 1.4% to 5,814 points

IT POWERS INDIAN SHARES TO WEEKLY GAINS; RELIANCE, BANK EARNINGS EYED

- Nifty 50 rose 1.09% to 24,334.30 and the BSE Sensex added 1.25% to 78,151.45

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 16 hours ago

Indian benchmarks rose on Friday, led by IT and financial stocks after upbeat results from Tech Mahindra and Jio Financial, swinging to weekly gains despite trading in their narrowest range of 2026.

The benchmark Nifty 50 rose 1.09% to 24,334.30 and the BSE Sensex added 1.25% to 78,151.45. Oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries gained 2.4% ahead of its June quarter earnings, due after markets close.

Reliance said its promoter group raised its stake to 50.48% in June quarter from 50%.

Financials rose 1.3%. Jio Financial jumped 3.1% after quarterly profit beat, while top private lenders HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank added 1.4% and 1.8%, ahead of their results over the weekend, with pre-quarterly updates signalling positive earnings outlook.

IT index rose 1.8%, led by a 4.1% jump in Tech Mahindra after quarterly revenue beat.

IT stocks added 4.3% this week, helped by revenue growth from TCS and HCLTech and soft U.S. inflation. TCS gained 9.7%, its best week in about six years.

The session's gains powered the benchmarks Nifty 50 and Sensex 0.5% and 0.8% higher this week.

The Nifty's 368-point band between 24,000 and 24,368 marked its tightest weekly range in 2026, underscoring consolidation.

Brent crude rose 1.8% to $86 a barrel on Friday, adding 12.5% this week on intensifying U.S.-Iran hostilities.

"Despite renewed Middle East tensions, markets held firm this week, helped by modest June-quarter revenue gains at IT firms and as softer U.S. inflation eased rate-hike worries, sparking bottom-fishing after the sector's sharp 23% year-to-date slide," said Raghvendra Nath, managing director at Ladderup Asset Managers.

"The consolidation also reflects investor caution ahead of key earnings due today and over the weekend, while the monsoon deficit keeps rural inflation and growth concerns alive."

Nine of the 16 major sectors logged weekly gains. The broader small-caps and mid-caps fell 0.6% and 1%, respectively, snapping their weekly winning streaks.

AUSTRALIAN SHARES SET FOR WORST DAY IN OVER TWO WEEKS AS MINERS, GOLD STOCKS DRAG

- The S&P/ASX 200 index fell 0.5% to 8,800.00

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 20 hours ago

Australian shares headed for their worst session in more than two weeks on Friday, dragged lower by mining and gold stocks on softer prices, while escalating tensions in the Middle East continued to weigh on risk appetite.

The S&P/ASX 200 index fell 0.5% to 8,800.00, as of 0018 GMT, set for its biggest drop since July 1.

The benchmark has lost 0.1% this week.

Investors remained on edge as the Middle East conflict intensified, with both Iran and the US stepping up their attacks to largely unravel last month's truce.

Miners lost 2.9%, their worst session in nearly a month, with BHP and Rio Tinto falling 2.7% and 2.4%, respectively.

Gold stocks added to the material sector slump, falling as much as 4.3%, the lowest since June 11 on weaker bullion.

The sub-index has lost over 6.5% so far this week, set for its biggest weekly drop since mid-March.

Both Evolution Mining and Northern Star Resources dropped 3.6% each.

Financials slid 0.4% but is set for its third consecutive weekly gain.

All the "Big Four" banks fell between 0.2% and 1%.

Capping losses, grocer Coles' shares gained as much as 5%, their best day since March and propelled the consumer staples sub-index up 2.4%, setting it up for its best session since June 10.

Australia's No. 2 grocer said it has ended talks to acquire Greencross Pet Wellness from US private equity firm TPG Capital. Energy stocks gained 1.8%.

They are up 1.9% this week, poised for a third straight weekly gain. Santos and Woodside Energy jumped 1.1% and 3.3%, respectively.

Further south, New Zealand's benchmark S&P/NZX 50 index was flat at 13,614.21.

It has lost nearly 0.8% this week and is on track for its worst week since the week ended May 15.

JAPAN'S NIKKEI SLUMPS OVER 4% ON TECH SELLOFF, MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

- The benchmark Nikkei 225 slid 4.4% to 63,896.48 as of the midday break

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 21 hours ago

TOKYO: Japan's Nikkei share gauge tumbled more than 4% on Friday, as a global rout in chipmakers and an escalation in the Middle East conflict prompted investors to shun risk assets.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 slid 4.4% to 63,896.48 as of the midday break, poised for its steepest decline in four months.

The broader Topix slipped 2.61% to 3,923.45. The decline followed overnight losses in US equities, where technology stocks tumbled, while US economic data showed strength and corporate earnings season was robust.

Hawkish remarks from Federal Reserve officials on Thursday reinforced expectations for further US rate hikes.

The Philadelphia SE Semiconductor index tumbled 4.3% overnight, while the US-listed shares of South Korean chipmaker SK Hynix plunged more than 13%.

With South Korea's market closed for a holiday, selling pressure intensified on Japan's tech market, and notably on chipmaker Kioxia Holdings, said Daisuke Hashizume, a senior strategist at Daiwa Securities.

"The long-term trend for AI and data centres is unchanged, but right now investors are worried that memory chip prices can rise sustainably," Hashizume added.

Geopolitical tensions also remained elevated, with US President Donald Trump threatening a broader escalation in strikes on Iran.

There were 83 advancers on the Nikkei 225 against 142 decliners.

Tech and AI-related shares were the biggest laggards. Kioxia was the index's biggest percentage loser, tumbling 16.05% for its steepest one-day decline since November 2025.

Taiyo Yuden was next, sliding 14.89%, followed by Sumco, down 14.69%.

Seven & I Holdings was among the top gainers, rising 4.38% after the company said it was in talks to buy a stake in Polish convenience store operator Zabka Group.

CHINA STOCKS TUMBLE AS CXMT'S $8.6 BILLION IPO STIRS LIQUIDITY CONCERNS

- China's large-cap index CSI300 was down 2.5% by the lunch break, hitting a three-month low

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 21 hours ago

SHANGHAI: China stocks tumbled on Friday, on track for their biggest weekly drop in 2-1/2 years, as chipmaker CXMT's $8.6 billion initial public offering stirs fears that a slew of upcoming domestic mega-IPOs will sap liquidity in a market already creaking under stretched valuations of AI-related stocks.

Hong Kong shares also swooned, led by tech shares, with sentiment soured by the renewed Iran war.

"CXMT is sucking in too much money, and investors are voting with their feet," said Stephen Huang, a Shanghai-based hedge fund manager. "For tech stocks, it's a disaster."

China's large-cap index CSI300 was down 2.5% by the lunch break, hitting a three-month low.

The Shanghai Composite Index declined 1.6%.

Both indexes are heading for the worst weekly performance since late December, 2024.

Hong Hong's Hang Seng Index lost 2%, the biggest drop in nearly four months.

Investor caution was reflected in the subscriptions for newly-issued shares of Chinese memory chip giant CXMT .

Retail subscriptions exceeded the CXMT shares available by more than 200 times, but the over-subscription rate of Asia's biggest IPO so far this year was much lower than most Chinese IPOs.

Wu Zhou, fund manager at Shenzhen Deyuan Investment Co, said many stocks that could benefit from CXMT IPO-funded expansion had soared ahead of its IPO, and now, investors are pocketing the gains.

Sell-off was savage in China tech stocks, as investors eye a slew of upcoming mega-IPOs by companies such as robot maker Unitree and chip-making giant Yangtze Memory Technologies, potentially stretching market liquidity.

The CSI AI Index and the CSI Integrated Circuits Index slumped 6%. The STAR Chip Index retreated 5%.

In an apparent effort to pacify the market, the official Shanghai Securities Journal argued in an article on Friday that mega IPOs do not change the market's direction.

"Liquidity in China's market is ample," the newspaper said.

"There's no need to worry too much about CXMT's IPO."

In Hong Kong, AI, biotech and chipmaking stocks were among the biggest decliners.-Reuters

SELLING AT BOURSE, KSE-100 SETTLES 2,300 POINTS LOWER

- Benchmark index closes the day at 175,802.78

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 12 hours ago

A volatile trading session was observed at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), with the benchmark KSE-100 Index shedding over 2,300 points on Friday.

The market opened on a positive note and briefly climbed to an intra-day high of 178,694.48, indicating early buying interest. However, the gains proved short-lived as sellers quickly took control, dragging the index lower.

The benchmark then traded largely range-bound around the 178,000-point level during the first half of the session before witnessing a sharp breakdown after mid-afternoon. Selling intensified during the second half, with the index falling steadily through the remainder of the session.

The KSE-100 eventually touched an intra-day low of 175,790.62 shortly before the close.

At close, the benchmark index settled at 175,802.78, down by 2,320.78 points or 1.30%.

“The negative sentiment was largely driven by escalating geopolitical tensions, as reports indicated that the US and Iran had intensified attacks beyond military targets, raising concerns over a broader conflict and the absence of any agreement regarding the Strait of Hormuz,” brokerage house Topline Securities said in its post-market report.

Among index heavyweights, ENGROH, SYS, UBL, OGDC, and PPL were the biggest drags on the benchmark, collectively shaving 694 points off the index, it added.

On a weekly basis, the KSE-100 Index declined by 3.5%.

The decline was “primarily due to continued geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, which kept crude oil prices elevated and weighed on investor sentiment”, Topline said.

On Thursday, the PSX extended its recovery for a second consecutive session as renewed optimism over the possible resumption of dialogue between the United States and Iran improved global risk appetite. The KSE-100 Index settled at 178,123.57 points, gaining 2,837.78 points or 1.62%.

Internationally, Asian stocks got off to a rocky start on Friday as the drag from chipmakers weighed on global equity indexes, while oil prices were set for their sharpest weekly rise in three months as tensions in the Middle East erupted anew.

Investors this week rotated out of semiconductor plays into other sectors such as banking after robust earnings from major lenders, leaving Asia vulnerable to the selloff given its heavier exposure to chips.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan was down 0.06% in early Asia trade while the Nikkei slid 2.8%.

Nasdaq futures lost 0.7%, and S&P 500 futures declined 0.4%.

EUROSTOXX 50 futures were down 0.5%.

Markets in South Korea were closed for a holiday after the government on Thursday announced it would temporarily ban new listings of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that are tied to certain major technology firms, while raising minimum required deposits for retail investors to invest in such products, in an effort to curb volatility.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani rupee extended its gains against the US dollar on Friday. The local unit closed the day at 277.96, a gain of Re0.01 against the greenback.

Volume on the all-share index decreased to 621.02 million from 736.95 million recorded in the previous close.

The value of shares declined to Rs29.88 billion from Rs34.61 billion in the previous session.

Cnergyico PK was the volume leader with 86.49 million shares, followed by TPL Properties with 62.54 million shares, and Pak Refinery with 38.58 million shares.

Shares of 497 companies were traded on Friday, of which 101 registered an increase, 367 recorded a fall, and 29 remained unchanged.

GOLD PRICES IN PAKISTAN FALL BY RS3,600 PER TOLA ON JULY 17

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

Stock & Commodity

International bullion prices slide below $4,000 an ounce, weighing on Pakistan's gold market

KARACHI: Gold prices in Pakistan fell sharply on Friday, July 17, 2026, with the price of 24-karat gold declining by Rs3,600 per tola, tracking a steep drop in international bullion markets.

According to the All Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Association (APGJA), the price of 24-karat gold settled at Rs421,836 per tola, down from Rs425,436 in the previous trading session.

The price of 24-karat gold per 10 grams also declined by Rs3,086 to Rs361,656, compared with Rs364,742 a day earlier.

International gold prices weaken

The decline in Pakistan's bullion market mirrored losses in global gold prices as investors reduced exposure to the precious metal.

In the international bullion market, spot gold fell by $36 per ounce to $3,994, slipping below the $4,000 mark from $4,026 in the previous session.

Analysts attributed the decline to weaker demand for safe-haven assets as investors reassessed market conditions and broader economic expectations.

Domestic market follows global trend

Gold prices in Pakistan generally move in line with international bullion markets, with local rates also influenced by fluctuations in the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar and domestic demand.

Jewellers revise local prices daily based on changes in global gold prices and exchange rate movements.

The latest decline reflects the close relationship between Pakistan's bullion market and international price trends.

Outlook

Market analysts expect gold prices in Pakistan to remain volatile in the coming weeks as investors closely monitor global economic data, central bank interest rate decisions and geopolitical developments.

Uncertainty surrounding inflation, monetary policy and international conflicts will continue to influence investor demand for gold, making global bullion prices the primary driver of domestic gold rates.

KSE-100 FALLS 2,320 POINTS AS US-IRAN TENSIONS SHAKE INVESTOR SENTIMENT

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

Stock & Commodity

Benchmark index slides 1.3% as fears over Middle East conflict and oil supply risks fuel broad-based selling

KARACHI: Pakistan's benchmark KSE-100 Index fell sharply on Friday, shedding 2,320 points, or 1.3%, as escalating tensions between the United States and Iran prompted investors to reduce exposure to equities amid growing concerns over regional stability and global energy supplies.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) benchmark closed at 175,803 points, extending losses after reports that Washington and Tehran had intensified attacks beyond military targets, raising fears of a broader conflict in the Middle East.

Investor concerns were further heightened by the lack of any breakthrough over the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil shipping routes, increasing uncertainty over global crude supplies and the potential impact on energy prices.

Geopolitical concerns dominate trading

The benchmark index remained under pressure throughout the trading session as investors adopted a risk-averse stance in response to rising geopolitical uncertainty.

Analysts said concerns that prolonged hostilities could disrupt global oil markets weighed heavily on sentiment, particularly given Pakistan's dependence on imported energy and the potential implications for inflation and the external account.

The broad-based decline erased gains across several major sectors, with blue-chip stocks leading the market lower.

Heavyweight stocks lead decline

Among the biggest contributors to the benchmark's losses were:

Engro Holdings (ENGROH) Systems Limited (SYS)

United Bank Limited (UBL) Oil and Gas Development Company (OGDC)

Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL)

Together, these heavyweight stocks shaved approximately 694 points off the KSE-100 Index.

Trading activity remains resilient

Despite the market's decline, trading activity remained relatively strong.

Investors traded 618 million shares during the session, with the total traded value reaching Rs29.8 billion.

By traded value, OGDC led the market with transactions worth Rs1.6 billion, followed by:

Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC): Rs1.3 billion

Engro Holdings (ENGROH): Rs931 million

National Bank of Pakistan (NBP): Rs906 million

Attock Refinery Limited (ATRL): Rs872 million

The healthy trading volumes indicated continued investor participation despite heightened volatility.

Outlook

Market participants are expected to closely monitor developments in the Middle East, particularly the evolving US-Iran conflict and any changes affecting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Analysts said further escalation could keep global oil prices elevated, increasing pressure on Pakistan's inflation outlook and external finances, while any signs of diplomatic progress may help restore investor confidence in the coming trading sessions.

Business & Finance / Industry

'KARACHI SAFE CITY PROJECT' CRUCIAL FOR ECONOMIC STABILITY: PHMA

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

KARACHI: The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PHMA) has called for the immediate implementation of the Karachi Safe City Project, saying it is essential for improving law and order, strengthening investor confidence and ensuring Pakistan's socioeconomic stability.

The demand was made during a meeting between PHMA office-bearers and the Additional Inspector-General of Police (Karachi Range), Azad Khan, at the association's central office.

Speaking on the occasion, Azad Khan said modern policing through digitalization and technology had become a necessity for effectively serving the people and maintaining law and order in Pakistan's largest metropolitan city.

He said Karachi being the country's largest industrial and commercial hub required greater use of technology, digital monitoring and real-time surveillance under the Smart Safe City Project to improve policing, reduce crime and facilitate the business community.

He said Karachi Police remained available round the clock to support and facilitate industrialists and exporters.

The additional IGP briefed participants on the police's ongoing efforts to reduce crime, including measures against street crime, prevention of vehicle theft, enhanced surveillance, improved deployment strategies and better coordination among police units.

He said it was equally important to improve both the actual security situation and the public perception of Karachi as a safe destination for investment, business and industrial activities.

He noted that the city had long suffered from a negative image, though the law and order situation had improved considerably over the years.

Azad Khan said better security strengthened investor confidence and helped promote exports.

He said that the government and industry should work together to project Karachi as one of the country's most business-friendly cities.

Highlighting the importance of smooth traffic management for industrial activity, he also proposed the development of a mobile application to simplify security arrangements for foreign businesspersons and engineers visiting Karachi.

Under the proposal, industries would be able to submit online security requests through a centrally managed system linked with the Karachi Police.

PHMA Patron-in-Chief Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, Central Chairman Muhammad Babar Khan and Zonal Chairman Faisal Arshad Sheikh welcomed Azad Khan and his delegation and briefed them on the association's role as one of Pakistan's oldest and largest representative bodies of the value-added apparel and textile sector, with a nationwide industrial presence.

The meeting was also attended by PHMA Senior Vice Chairman Bashir Ghaffar, Vice Chairman Salman Ishaq, former chairmen Irfan Zakaria Bawany and Abdul Jabbar Gajiani, former senior vice chairman Shabbir Bilwani and other leading exporters and association members.

Speaking on behalf of the association, Muhammad Jawed Bilwani praised Azad Khan for his services to Karachi Police and his performance in previous assignments.

He urged both the federal and Sindh governments to give priority to Karachi by completing and enforcing the Smart Safe City Project across the city's entire jurisdiction.

He said Karachi contributed around 70 per cent of the country's total revenue collection and about 95 per cent of the Sindh Revenue Board's revenue, making it imperative to improve the city's security infrastructure.

He added that the immediate implementation of the Smart Safe City Project would help expand business and industrial activity while attracting greater domestic and foreign investment.

PBF ANNOUNCES NEW OFFICE-BEARERS FOR FAISALABAD

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

FAISALABAD: With Pakistan's textile sector under increasing strain from soaring energy costs, high financing rates, escalating production expenses, and intense regional competition, business leaders have urged the government to introduce immediate policy measures to protect the country's largest export-oriented industry.

Faisalabad, Pakistan's industrial and textile hub, contributes an estimated USD 5.5 billion in textile exports annually, nearly 45 percent of the country's total textile exports—making its economic stability crucial to national export growth and employment. Against this backdrop, the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has announced its new office bearers for the Faisalabad Chapter for a two-year term, effective immediately, according to a notification issued by Chief Organiser Ahmad Jawad.

The newly elected team comprises Director FIEDMC Mian Kashif Zia as President, Senior Vice Chairman of PHMA (North Zone) Ahmed Afzal Awan as Senior Vice President of the forum, Mian Tanvir Ahmed and Muhammad Abdullah Qadri as Vice President's, and senior trade leader of the city Mian Tanveer Riaz as General Secretary of the forum.

Addressing members of the business community, PBF Faisalabad President Mian Kashif Zia thanked the forum's leadership for its confidence in the new team and pledged to work closely with industrialists, exporters, policymakers, and government institutions to strengthen Pakistan's industrial and export sectors.

Describing Faisalabad as the country's industrial backbone, Kashif Zia said the city's manufacturing base plays a pivotal role in Pakistan's economy. However, he noted that rising electricity and gas tariffs, inconsistent energy supplies, high borrowing costs, liquidity constraints, and increasing production expenses have weakened the competitiveness of exporters, while many small and medium-sized enterprises are struggling to sustain operations.

"The government must urgently introduce industry-friendly policies that reduce the cost of doing business and restore investor confidence," Zia said.

"Affordable energy, easier access to finance, stable taxation policies, timely payment of sales tax refunds, and effective export facilitation are essential to revive industrial growth and strengthen Pakistan's position in international markets."

Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Afzal Awan said Faisalabad's industrial landscape extends far beyond textiles, encompassing garments, knitwear, hosiery, spinning, weaving, textile processing, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, food processing, plastics, packaging, and agricultural machinery manufacturing.

Technology

ZONG DEPLOYS 5G-READY INDOOR SOLUTION AT ISLAMABAD AIRPORT

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

IT & Telecom

Telecom operator introduces advanced indoor connectivity system and customer facilitation desk at Pakistan's busiest aviation hub

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading technology services provider, has begun deploying its exclusive 5G-ready Indoor Building Solution (IBS) at Islamabad International Airport, becoming the only telecom operator to introduce the advanced connectivity infrastructure at the facility.

The initiative aims to enhance indoor network coverage across passenger terminals, enabling travellers to access seamless high-speed connectivity while supporting Pakistan's transition towards next-generation digital infrastructure.

Alongside the network deployment, Zong has established a Customer Facilitation Desk at the airport to provide passengers with instant SIM activation, data services and dedicated on-ground support.

Improving digital travel experience

Zong said the deployment will improve connectivity for millions of passengers using Islamabad International Airport by delivering a more reliable indoor network experience.

The company said the project represents a major step in developing future-ready digital infrastructure and strengthening Pakistan's digital ecosystem.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior officials from Zong, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) and Huawei Global, reflecting collaboration between telecom and aviation stakeholders to advance digital transformation.

Building future-ready 5G ecosystem

Speaking at the ceremony, Zong Chief Technical Officer Mao Weiliang said connectivity has evolved beyond traditional communication and has become a foundation for intelligent travel, digital services and economic development.

He said Zong, together with its partners, is developing a future-ready 5G digital ecosystem at Islamabad International Airport that will enhance current passenger services while supporting smart aviation solutions in the future.

Zong Executive Director Sales & Distribution Faheem Durrani said the combination of the Customer Facilitation Desk and advanced connectivity infrastructure would help passengers stay connected while improving service delivery.

He added that Zong remains committed to expanding access to innovative technology solutions and creating greater value for customers across Pakistan.

Supporting smart aviation goals

Islamabad International Airport Manager Aftab Gillani said modern travellers increasingly expect airports to provide seamless digital experiences alongside physical infrastructure.

He noted that Zong's 5G-ready Indoor Building Solution would improve passenger convenience and support the evolving requirements of modern aviation.

Advancing Digital Pakistan vision

Zong said the initiative forms part of its broader strategy to establish intelligent digital infrastructure across major transit hubs in Pakistan.

By integrating 5G connectivity, artificial intelligence capabilities and advanced digital services, the company aims to support the Digital Pakistan vision and create smarter, more connected travel experiences.

The deployment of 5G-ready infrastructure at Islamabad International Airport is expected to strengthen Pakistan's digital connectivity while laying the foundation for technology-driven aviation services in the future.

HANDSET IMPORTS SOAR 540% IN PAKISTAN AS LOCAL PRODUCTION SLOWS: PTA

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

IT & Telecom

PTA data shows handset imports surged 540% year-on-year, lifting overall mobile phone supply

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's local mobile phone production declined 12% year-on-year (YoY) in June 2026, while handset imports surged sharply, increasing the overall supply of mobile phones in the domestic market, according to the latest data released by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).

The PTA reported that local manufacturers and assemblers produced 1.93 million mobile phones during June, down from 2.19 million units in the corresponding month last year. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, production also slipped 4% from 2.0 million units assembled in May 2026.

Mobile phone imports surge

Despite weaker domestic manufacturing, Pakistan's overall mobile phone availability increased significantly as imports accelerated.

The country imported 0.64 million mobile phones in June 2026, compared with 0.10 million units in June 2025, marking a 540% YoY increase. Imports also doubled from 0.32 million units in May, reflecting a 100% MoM rise.

Consequently, the total number of mobile phones available in the local market reached 2.57 million units during June, representing a 12% increase year-on-year and an 11% rise month-on-month.

Market analysts attributed the surge in imports to pre-budget buying activity and stronger consumer demand for premium smartphones following the launch of AIRLINK's Apple mono store in Pakistan.

Domestic production declines in first half of 2026

The slowdown was also reflected in cumulative production figures.

Between January and June 2026, local manufacturers assembled 13.10 million mobile phones, compared with 14.24 million units during the same period in 2025, a decline of 8%.

Meanwhile, mobile phone imports reached 2.55 million units during the first six months of the year, registering a 197% increase compared with the corresponding period last year.

The data suggests that imported smartphones captured a larger share of the domestic market despite Pakistan's continued reliance on local assembly.

Share of locally assembled phones declines

The increase in imported handsets reduced the contribution of locally assembled devices to overall market demand.

According to the PTA, locally manufactured and assembled phones accounted for 75% of Pakistan's total mobile phone demand in June 2026, compared with 86% in May.

However, domestic production remained the dominant source of supply over the first half of the year, meeting 85% of total handset demand between January and June.

Outlook

The latest PTA figures indicate that Pakistan's mobile phone assembly industry continues to play a central role in meeting domestic demand, although rising imports have temporarily reduced its market share.

Industry analysts expect production trends to stabilise in the coming months as post-budget demand normalises and manufacturers adjust output in response to changing consumer preferences and market conditions.

SAMSUNG TO PRE-INSTALL AMAZON MUSIC ON SELECT GALAXY DEVICES

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

IT & Telecom

Samsung has announced a new partnership with Amazon that will see the Amazon Music app pre-installed on select Galaxy smartphones and tablets, while offering eligible users a complimentary three-month subscription to Amazon Music Unlimited.

The move, announced by Samsung's U.S. division, is designed to give Galaxy users immediate access to Amazon's music streaming platform. However, it remains unclear whether the initiative will be limited to the United States or expand to other markets.

Free Amazon Music Unlimited subscription included

Customers who activate the offer will receive a three-month Amazon Music Unlimited subscription at no extra cost. The service normally costs $13 per month and typically includes only a one-month free trial for new users.

The subscription provides access to more than 100 million songs, millions of podcasts, Ultra HD audio, Spatial Audio content, artist livestreams and exclusive merchandise.

Users will also receive one Audible audiobook each month, a benefit included with the subscription.

App now available through Galaxy Store

Samsung also confirmed that Amazon Music is now available through the Galaxy Store.

Existing Galaxy device owners may also qualify for the free three-month offer by downloading the app directly from the Galaxy Store rather than the Google Play Store.

While Amazon Music has long been available on Google Play, Samsung said its arrival on the Galaxy Store is part of a broader collaboration between the two companies.

Global rollout remains uncertain

Although Samsung U.S. announced the partnership, the accompanying statement refers to Amazon Music being pre-installed on "millions of select Samsung mobile and tablet devices globally."

The companies have not clarified which Galaxy models will receive the app by default or whether the rollout will extend beyond the U.S. market.

Executives highlight partnership

Samsung said the collaboration is intended to expand premium entertainment experiences for Galaxy users.

"We are constantly finding new ways to deliver special benefits and value for our Galaxy users. Through our collaboration with Amazon Music, Samsung continues to elevate premium experiences across the Galaxy experience," said Izzet Asayas, Head of CTV & Mobile Business Development at Samsung.

Karolina Joynathsing, Director of Business Development at Amazon Music, said the partnership gives customers immediate access to the streaming service.

"By pre-installing Amazon Music on select Galaxy devices and making it available in the Galaxy Store, we're putting world-class audio entertainment in customers' hands from the very first moment — with a free Amazon Music Unlimited trial to make that first experience truly exceptional," she said.

The announcement comes as smartphone manufacturers continue expanding software partnerships aimed at offering bundled services alongside new devices.

XI SAYS AI SHOULD NOT BE DOMINATED BY ONE COUNTRY

Published July 18, 2026 Updated July 18, 2026 06:50am

SHANGHAI: Artificial intelligence should not be dominated by a single country, China's President Xi Jinping said Friday at a major technology conference in Shanghai, urging international cooperation on its development.

Chinese AI models are catching up to the most powerful US offerings and attracting global users with lower costs.

But how to govern the sector has become a key question, as concerns grow over military AI deployment or its use by hackers and terrorists.

"AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation," Xi said at the opening of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference.

"We should jointly oppose overstretching the national security concept in the field of AI or placing one country's security over that of others," Xi added.

The United States and European Union restrict tech exports to China over national security concerns, while tussles between Washington and American AI labs have raised the issue of who controls top technologies.

"China is trying to lead not only in terms of the technology development, but also in terms of AI governance," said Shengyun Lu, AI entrepreneur and founder of Shanghai consultancy Praxis Advisory.

Lu told *AFP* that in his view, AI should be regulated "like we regulate nuclear power".

'Under human control'

The four-day WAIC gathers more than 1,000 of China's tech firms, officials, researchers and industry figures.

Around 3,000 products are on display, from powerful semiconductor systems for AI computing to a smartphone that can autonomously operate apps.

But eyes were first on Xi's vision of how the world should handle the potential impacts of AI.

"We should put in place laws and regulations, technological monitoring, early warning, and emergency response systems, in order to… ensure AI is always under human control," Xi told the conference, calling for a "people-centric" approach.

On Thursday, foreign minister Wang Yi and representatives from 29 countries including Russia, Pakistan and Indonesia agreed to establish an intergovernmental AI cooperation group.

The World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, headquartered in Shanghai, aims to ensure the "healthy and orderly" development of AI, state media reported.

"I can understand Western countries are absent from this initiative, because Europe already has its own AI act and the United States is already defining their regulations," Lu said.

New York University business and technology professor Arun Sundararajan said "small glimmers of recent cooperation between Presidents Xi and Trump" were encouraging, but it was "hard to imagine there being a single approach to AI governance globally".

Mega AI consumption

Leaders including UN chief Antonio Guterres, Cambodia's Hun Manet and Thailand's Anutin Charnvirakul are attending WAIC, which showcases the cutting edge of Chinese tech.

Early Friday, the Beijing-based startup Moonshot AI released a powerful new flagship model, Kimi K3, which it said "demonstrated frontier-level performance".

Other highlights this year include MiniMax's M3 model and Huawei's Atlas 950 "supernode", an AI architecture for learning and reasoning.

"The main theme will be the transition from AI models to systems that can be deployed at scale" in everyday life, Poe Zhao of analysis publication Hello China Tech said.

Daily consumption in China of "tokens" — the industry unit of AI usage — has increased a thousandfold over the past two years, according to state media citing officials.

A growing number of companies abroad, like Siemens, are adopting Chinese open-source AI models, attracted by their performance, lower cost and ability to customise, in contrast to the closed systems of US giants such as OpenAI and Anthropic.

Both those US firms had to temporarily withhold the release of their latest AI models because of government concerns that they could help hackers break into critical online infrastructure.

"Models these days are controlled by very few," so more cooperative governance could expand access to them, 34-year-old Mike Luan, who works for an AI research lab, told *AFP* outside the WAIC venue.

INDIA'S WIPRO SLIPS AS WEAK FORECAST FUELS FEARS OF PROLONGED IT SLOWDOWN

- The stock was down at 174.17 rupees, making it the biggest loser on both the Nifty IT index and the benchmark Nifty 50

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 11:52am

Shares of India's Wipro fell 2% on Friday after the IT services firm's quarterly earnings miss and weak outlook disappointed investors, reinforcing concerns that sluggish client spending, delayed deal ramp-ups and AI-led disruption could weigh on growth for longer.

The stock was down at 174.17 rupees, making it the biggest loser on both the Nifty IT index and the benchmark Nifty 50.

Business & Finance / Companies

INDIA'S TATA TECHNOLOGIES POSTS QUARTERLY PROFIT RISE, RETAINS REVENUE FORECAST

- The Tata group company's profit rose to 1.81 billion Indian rupees ($18.8 million) for the quarter ended June 30

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 08:20pm

BENGALURU: Indian engineering research and development firm Tata Technologies reported a 6.1% rise in first-quarter profit on Friday, on a boost from its services segment.

Tata Technologies, which provides engineering, product design and manufacturing digitalisation services to automotive, aerospace and industrial machinery clients, counts JLR and Tata Motors among its largest clients

The Tata group company's profit rose to 1.81 billion rupees ($18.8 million) for the quarter ended June 30, from 1.70 billion rupees a year earlier

Revenue jumped 34% to 16.65 billion rupees

The company retained its double-digit organic revenue growth for fiscal year 2027 on the back of investments in AI, operational efficiency, and continued portfolio diversification, CEO Warren Harris said in a statement

India's Tata Capital raises $400 million in dollar bond sale after strong demand

Engineering research and development firms, which largely depend on orders from the U.S. and Europe, have been under pressure due to slowing adoption of EVs and clients cutting back on spending amid geopolitical tensions

INDIAN REGULATOR WARNS OF 'BOSS SCAM', A CYBER FRAUD TARGETING TOP EXECUTIVES

- Indian regulator SEBI warns against 'boss scams' where fake CEOs trick employees into transferring funds; verify all payment requests

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

MUMBAI: Indian markets regulator on Friday issued a warning against a cyber fraud involving impersonation of CEOs and other senior executives of companies to trick employees into transferring funds.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), while referring to this as 'boss scam', said the warning was being issued after it received information from Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre of rising instances.

The regulator said fraudsters are targeting finance executives and other employees through email, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and social media platforms while posing as CEOs or other senior executives.

The scammers then instruct victims to transfer funds to accounts controlled by them.

India markets regulator tightens ethics rules for current, former employees

Another variation of the scam involves sending malware files to the employees. Once opened, the malware can hijack WhatsApp Web sessions or compromise devices.

"The fraudster gets access to the finance officer's WhatsApp account and then contacts accounts or finance employees, instructing them to make immediate payments to specified mule bank accounts," SEBI said.

The regulator has asked its regulated entities to direct officials to not transfer funds solely on the basis of instructions received on any social media platforms.

FINANCE MINISTER PUSHES FASTER CAPITAL MARKET REFORMS TO DEEPEN CORPORATE DEBT MARKET

- Says corporate debt market remains underdeveloped relative to the economy's financing requirements

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 06:47pm

Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday directed authorities to accelerate capital market reforms, stressing the need to develop Pakistan's corporate debt market to reduce reliance on bank financing and expand long-term funding options for businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the ministry said in a statement.

Chairing a meeting of the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC), the finance minister reviewed progress on capital market reforms and said that while Pakistan's equity market had shown encouraging progress, the corporate debt market remained underdeveloped relative to the economy's financing requirements.

He said deepening the debt capital market would help diversify financing sources, promote market-based funding and create a more balanced and resilient financial ecosystem.

The meeting reviewed an ongoing external study on developing Pakistan's local currency-linked bond market. According to the Finance Division, the study will cover reforms related to sovereign financing, non-bank financial institutions, primary dealers, secondary markets, market infrastructure, hedging and derivatives, and the broader capital market framework.

Aurangzeb directed that the study should provide practical, evidence-based recommendations supported by international best practices to guide future reforms.

The council also reviewed findings from surveys and stakeholder consultations conducted by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on challenges faced by the country's top 100 listed companies in accessing the corporate debt market. The finance minister called for broader engagement with medium-sized enterprises and growth-oriented businesses that could benefit from capital market financing.

To strengthen institutional capacity, Aurangzeb directed the SECP and the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to establish dedicated Debt Desks at the senior management level with clear mandates, measurable performance targets and responsibility for overseeing implementation.

He also stressed the need to improve competition among market intermediaries and infrastructure providers to enhance efficiency, improve service quality and reduce transaction costs for issuers and investors.

The meeting discussed simplifying the corporate debt issuance process through closer coordination among the SECP, PSX and the Central Depository Company (CDC). The finance minister called for a one-window listing framework supported by standardized procedures, digital integration and simplified corporate debt listing workflows to improve transparency and ease of access.

Participants also discussed measures to expand Pakistan's Islamic capital market, including the domestic Sukuk market, improving secondary market liquidity, promoting green and sustainable financial instruments, taxation reforms, SME preparedness, financial literacy and digital investment platforms.

Emphasising implementation, Aurangzeb said future work of the Capital Market Development Council should be organised through thematic working groups with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and regular progress reviews.

The meeting was attended by the SECP chairman, representatives of the State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan Stock Exchange, Central Depository Company, National Clearing Company of Pakistan

Limited, Pakistan Banks' Association, Pakistan Business Council, Tax Policy Office and senior Finance Division officials.

APPLE CLOSES IN ON NVIDIA IN RACE FOR WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE COMPANY

- Apple was last valued at $4.90 trillion as its shares rose marginally in premarket trading on Friday

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 06:43pm

Apple is within striking distance of overtaking Nvidia as the world's most valuable company, a milestone that would reshuffle the ranks of tech heavyweights as investors reassess the outlook for AI.

Apple was last valued at $4.90 trillion as its shares rose marginally in premarket trading on Friday, while Nvidia was roughly at the same level, following a 2.4% decline.

If Apple overtakes Nvidia, it would reclaim the top spot for the first time since April last year. The close race shows that investors are broadening their focus beyond the obvious beneficiaries of the AI boom, such as Nvidia, which has been at the helm for nearly a year.

"Apple was seen as a laggard in the AI race because it wasn't spending to develop models, but now sentiment has changed," said Toni Meadows, head of investment at BRI Wealth Management.

"Apple is less exposed to capex intensity and better positioned to monetize AI via services, ecosystem lock-in, and hardware upgrades. The re-rating reflects confidence in earnings durability rather than speculative AI upside."

For a company that was often seen trailing in the AI race, the narrowing gap with Nvidia reflects Apple's efforts to establish itself more firmly among the sector's leading players, and could shape how CEO Tim Cook's final months at the helm are viewed.

Apple sues OpenAI, two former employees for trade secrets theft

Cook is preparing to cede his role to hardware veteran John Ternus in September.

Last month, the company rolled out a long-delayed overhaul of Siri, betting the upgraded assistant would help close the gap with Big Tech rivals and new-age startups in the crucial AI race.

Some analysts say Apple is sitting on an AI gold mine in the form of the personal data that lives on every iPhone. The data could make Siri's answers more useful and the assistant more capable.

The challenge is that such data is locked away in operating systems in the name of privacy and the company would have to find a way to unlock its value.

AI spending lifts new winners

Nvidia became the first company in the world to surpass a $5 trillion market valuation in October, a landmark that propelled it into a rarefied territory that was far beyond the reach of its rivals.

Even if Nvidia is superseded by Apple, it would not necessarily signal a lasting change in the companies' relative standing. The chipmaker remains a major beneficiary of AI-related spending, and its graphics processors are powering much of the generative AI frenzy.

Apple to spend $30 billion on Broadcom chips as it boosts US sourcing

Nvidia could also reclaim the top spot if sentiment shifts.

Besides, Apple is in a delicate position itself, having raised prices to offset rising costs – a strategy that could hurt demand.

"I don't see any meaningful distinction should Nvidia lose its crown. It's likely to be a significant participant in whatever happens going forward," said Benjamin Hall, vice president, alpha research at Segal Marco Advisors.

However, the AI enthusiasm has spread to other corners of the semiconductor industry. The bigger winners this year have been memory chipmakers such as Micron, which crossed $1 trillion in market value in May as investors embraced the significance of memory chips in AI infrastructure.

South Korea's SK Hynix also listed on the Nasdaq earlier this month, adding another player to the race for investor attention.

"The new entrants to the market could spread out the focus away from the pure Magnificent Seven names into a wider number of names," Hall said.

The eye-watering chips rally ran into turbulence in July as investors reassessed the sustainability of the artificial intelligence trade, knocking the Philadelphia SE Semiconductor index down almost 19% from its all-time highs.

Despite the steep fall, the index has performed better than Nvidia so far this year.

SP GROUP COMPLETES LONG-DELAYED DEBT FUNDRAISING, SOURCES SAY

- SP Group, Tata Sons' largest minority shareholder, owns around 18.4% of the company's shares, has struggled for years to monetise the holding

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 04:44pm

MUMBAI: India's Shapoorji Pallonji Group has completed its planned fundraising after accepting bids worth 215 billion rupees ($2.25 billion) for a three-year rupee bond issue, three sources said on Friday.

The long-delayed fundraising, aimed at refinancing existing debt, was completed through an investment by one SP Group entity in another, with investors assured the group would monetise part of its Tata Sons stake through a listing or share sale within 18 months.

SP Group, Tata Sons' largest minority shareholder, owns around 18.4% of the company's shares, has struggled for years to monetise the holding.

As part of the fundraising, SP Group company Eqyizen Investment raised funds through three-year zero-coupon rupee bonds yielding 18.95%. The issue closed for subscription on Friday and is due to settle on Monday, the sources said.

India's SP Group raises $650 million via debut dollar debt sale, sources say

Mauritius-based SP Group entity Mercury Finance was a key investor in the rupee tranche after raising $650 million through three-year dollar bonds at a 14.50% yield, Reuters reported on Thursday.

"The Mauritius based SPV (special purpose vehicle) invested the entire proceeds from the dollar bonds into the rupee issue, which saw subscriptions from large private credit funds, as well, one of the sources mentioned above said.

Reuters could not identify the private credit funds that invested.

The sources declined to be named as they were not authorized to speak to the media. SP Group and Deutsche Bank, the sole arranger and an investor in the issue, did not respond to Reuters requests for comment.

The rupee bonds are secured by the group's Tata Sons stake, held through Cyrus Investments, with most of the proceeds earmarked to refinance existing debt.

In June 2023, another SP Group company, Goswami Infratech, raised 143 billion rupees through zero-coupon bonds at an 18.75% yield.

The notes have since had their maturity extended twice, most recently to July 31 from June 30, with the total payout, including interest, now estimated at about 145 billion rupees.

HBL WINS 'PAKISTAN'S BEST BANK 2026' AWARD BY EUROMONEY

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 04:05pm

Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2026 has awarded HBL the accolade of 'Pakistan's Best Bank'. The Bank has also won 'Pakistan's Best Retail Bank', 'Pakistan's Best Bank for

Sustainable Finance', 'Pakistan's Best for Capital Markets Advisory', and 'Pakistan's Best Investment Bank for M&A'.

Euromoney is a global English-language publication focused on business and finance. These awards are the most prestigious recognition in the banking industry, globally.

The Euromoney citation acknowledges that "Habib Bank Limited (HBL) is recognized as Pakistan's best bank for 2026, reflecting its market leadership, scale and consistent delivery across retail, corporate, investment and private banking segments, underpinned by strong financial performance and nationwide reach."

The citation went on to note, "The bank played a pivotal role in national development, advising on Pakistan's inaugural panda bond and supporting major infrastructure projects."

Commenting on the recognition, Muhammad Nassir Salim, President & CEO – HBL, said: "These awards reflect HBL's transformation into a client-first organization, delivering unparalleled value to our clients. Being recognized as Pakistan's Best Bank is a tribute to our millions of clients' continued trust and confidence in HBL."

VOLVO CARS POSTS SMALLER PROFIT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER

- Volvo Cars on Friday reported a decline in profits for the second quarter

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 11:42am

STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Volvo Cars on Friday reported a decline in profits for the second quarter compared with the first three months while the automaker hopes to speed up its recovery with deliveries of the new EX60 electric model in the time ahead.

The company, majority-owned by China's Geely Holding , posted an operating profit of 800 million Swedish crowns ($82,76 million) for the April to June period, lagging the 1.6 billion reported in the first quarter this year.

Markets / Financial

INDIA BONDS SINK ON OIL SPIKE, INDEX-ENTRY UNCERTAINTY

- Benchmark 6.94% 2036 bond yield ended at 6.7799%

Published July 17, 2026 Updated July 17, 2026 08:46pm

MUMBAI: Indian government bonds tumbled on Friday, with the benchmark yield posting its biggest weekly rise in eight weeks, as oil prices spiked and the lack of clarity on an index inclusion announcement prompted traders to cut risk before the weekend.

The benchmark 6.94% 2036 bond yield ended at 6.7799%, up from Thursday's close of 6.7478%. It rose 6.5 basis points this week, after staying range-bound last week and declining in the previous six.

Bond yields move inversely to prices.

Brent crude futures jumped nearly 2% on Friday to $86 per barrel, taking their weekly rise to about 13%, as fighting between U.S. and Iran intensified, disrupting oil traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

For India, the world's third-largest oil importer, higher crude prices can pressure the rupee, widen the import bill and stretch government finances.

Fears of higher U.S. rates also weighed on emerging-market bonds earlier in the week, though softer U.S. inflation and PPI data helped scale back rate-hike bets.

This helped preserve the yield advantage of EM local-currency bonds, HSBC said in a note.

Foreign demand for Indian bonds remained firm, with overseas investors net buying about 16.5 billion rupees of bonds under the fully accessible route from Monday to Thursday amid expectations of possible inclusion in Bloomberg's index.

"Traders cut holdings in a risk-off move on Friday as crude climbed further, and in the absence of news on index inclusion, the selling could continue next week," a trader at a primary dealership said.

Rates

India's overnight index swap rates rose as traders pared risk before the weekend.

The one-year rate was up 3.25 bps at 5.9275%, the two-year rose 1.75 bps to 6.0850%, and the five-year climbed 3.75 bps to 6.3775%.

PAKISTAN FDI FALLS 94% TO $14 MILLION IN JUNE 2026

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

Finance

Net FDI declines sharply due to outflows from food and electronics sectors, while power and financial services provide support

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) declined sharply by 94% month-on-month in June 2026, falling to $14 million compared with $214 million recorded in May, according to data released on foreign investment flows.

The steep decline was mainly driven by net outflows from the food and electronic sectors, which significantly reduced overall investment inflows during the month.

However, increased investment activity in the power and financial services sectors provided partial support and helped cushion the impact of the decline.

United States records major outflow

Country-wise data showed that the United States recorded a net outflow of $165 million during June 2026, making it one of the largest contributors to the decline in Pakistan's monthly FDI.

Meanwhile, China and Hong Kong remained among the key sources of foreign investment inflows during the period.

Analysts noted that monthly FDI figures can fluctuate significantly due to the timing of major transactions, sector-specific investments, and profit repatriation by foreign companies.

FY26 FDI remains positive

Despite the sharp monthly decline, Pakistan recorded total net Foreign Direct Investment of $1.64 billion during fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26).

The government has continued efforts to attract foreign investment through economic reforms, policy measures and initiatives aimed at improving the overall business environment.

Officials have highlighted investment facilitation, industrial expansion and greater participation from international companies as key priorities for strengthening Pakistan's external sector.

Outlook

Analysts said Pakistan's ability to sustain FDI inflows will depend on maintaining macroeconomic stability, improving investor confidence and ensuring a predictable policy environment.

While the June decline highlights short-term volatility in foreign investment flows, continued inflows into strategic sectors such as energy, financial services and infrastructure remain important for supporting long-term economic growth.

PAKISTAN POSTS $139 MILLION CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT IN FY26 AS IMPORTS OUTPACE EXPORTS

Written by

Hamza Shahnawaz

in

Finance, Top stories

Record remittances cushion external account, but widening trade gap pushes balance back into deficit

KARACHI: Pakistan recorded a current account deficit (CAD) of $139 million in fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26) as a sharp rise in imports outpaced modest export growth, reversing the $1.84 billion surplus posted in the previous fiscal year.

According to the latest balance of payments data, the country's external account remained under pressure despite record workers' remittances and strong growth in services exports. Higher import demand widened the trade gap, offsetting gains from external inflows.

Imports grow faster than exports

Pakistan's total exports reached $40.9 billion in FY26, representing a marginal 0.2% year-on-year (YoY) increase from $40.8 billion in FY25.

The improvement was driven by a 18.7% increase in services exports, although goods exports declined 4.6% during the fiscal year.

In contrast, total imports climbed 8.5% YoY to $76.4 billion, reflecting stronger domestic demand and higher import activity.

Goods imports: up 9.0%

Services imports: up 5.7%

As a result, Pakistan's trade deficit widened 19.8% to $35.5 billion in FY26.

June current account deficit widens

During June 2026, Pakistan recorded a current account deficit of $649 million, compared with a $220 million deficit in the same month a year earlier.

Monthly imports increased 19.5% YoY to $7.1 billion, while exports rose 8.0% to $3.6 billion, leading to a wider external gap.

Record remittances support external stability

Workers' remittances remained the country's largest source of foreign exchange inflows.

Pakistan received a record $41.6 billion in remittances during FY26, an increase of 8.6% over the previous fiscal year.

Overall secondary income reached $43.8 billion, rising 8.7% YoY, with remittances accounting for the overwhelming share of inflows.

In June 2026, overseas Pakistanis sent $3.5 billion, up 2.0% from a year earlier but 18.3% lower than in May due to a seasonal decline following strong festive-period transfers.

Primary income deficit improves

Pakistan's net primary income deficit narrowed 4.5% during FY26 to $8.4 billion, compared with $8.8 billion in FY25.

For June alone, the primary income deficit stood at $819 million, slightly higher than $791 million recorded in June last year.

Financial account slips into deficit

Pakistan's financial account recorded a $1.76 billion deficit in June 2026.

For the full fiscal year, the financial account posted a $1.21 billion deficit, compared with a $1.59 billion surplus in FY25, indicating relatively weaker capital and financial inflows.

REER edges higher

The Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) increased slightly to 106.44 in June 2026, up from 106.15 in May, suggesting a modest appreciation in Pakistan's real exchange rate.

Outlook

While Pakistan returned to a modest current account deficit in FY26, record workers' remittances and resilient services exports helped cushion pressure on the external sector. However, the sharp rise in imports and widening trade deficit underscore the need to boost exports, attract sustained foreign investment and strengthen foreign exchange inflows to maintain external sector stability in the coming fiscal year.

Markets / Energy

OIL PRICES SURGE OVER 4PC

- Brent crude settles 4.59% higher at $88.10; WTI rises 4.48% to $82.49

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 3 hours ago

NEW YORK: Oil prices climbed more than 4 percent to their highest in more than a month on Friday after the US and Iran stepped up attacks across the Gulf, with shipping threatened by a potential Red Sea closure on top of the restricted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude futures settled USD 3.87, or 4.59 percent, higher to USD 88.10 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate futures rose USD 3.54, or 4.48 percent, at USD 82.49. Both were at their highest since mid-June.

For the week, both benchmarks gained about 16 percent, with Brent on track for a third consecutive weekly gain and WTI set for its second.

The two foes expanded fighting on Friday, with the US striking bridges and an airport in Iran and Tehran hitting a power and desalination plant in Kuwait. Iran said it launched more strikes on US facilities in the Middle East, including the first direct attack in Syria, after a sixth straight night of US strikes on Iranian military facilities.

"The market is reacting to the increasing hostilities between Iran and the United States that have culminated this week with nightly attacks on Iranian infrastructure and retaliation by Iran on its neighbors' infrastructure," said Andrew Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates. "If more tankers come under fire and become damaged, we're going to see oil prices continue to move up as shipowners simply refuse to enter the Persian Gulf." The collapsed truce between the US and Iran has resulted in a sharp decline in oil flows in the strait as Iran targets vessels transiting through it.

Before the Iran war, about 20 percent of global oil supplies flowed through the waterway. Iran has pressed the Houthis to close the Red Sea route if the US attacks Iran's power infrastructure.

"Given that so much of Saudi Arabia's exports have been redirected to the port of Yanbu via the East-West Pipeline to avoid Hormuz, any such development is a threat indeed," Tamas Varga, analyst at PVM Oil Associates, wrote in a note. Saudi Arabia has diverted more than 70 percent of its normal daily crude exports to the Red Sea port of Yanbu since the beginning of the war.

Shipments from Yanbu averaged 4 million barrels per day in recent weeks, up from around 973,000 bpd in the same period last year.

Qatar's defence ministry said its armed forces thwarted an Iranian missile attack early on Friday and the interior ministry said a child was wounded by shrapnel resulting from interception operations. In a different conflict zone, Ukraine's military said it struck a Russian oil refinery in the Yaroslavl region on Thursday.

POWER GENERATION DROPS 2.5PC IN JUNE

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

ISLAMABAD: The country's power generation declined by 2.5 percent in June 2026 compared to the same month last year, primarily due to disruptions in LNG supply from Qatar, which recently extended force majeure amid a war-like situation in the Middle East.

Despite the drop in generation, the average cost of electricity surged by 14 percent to Rs8.9885 per kWh in June 2026, up from Rs7.8698 per kWh in June 2025.

Hydel generation fell by 3 percent to 5,242 GWh in June 2026, accounting for 39.03 percent of total generation, compared to 5,410 GWh in June 2025. The decline is attributed to a fault at the Tarbela generation facility.

Based on the local coal, the electricity generation decreased by 10 percent to 1,358 GWh from 1,510 GWh. However, generation from imported coal rose by 21.6 percent to 1,699 GWh, up from 1,397 GWh in the corresponding month last year.

The Independent System and Market Operator (ISMO) also allowed generation from high-speed diesel (HSD) and residual fuel oil (RFO) at significantly higher costs of Rs57 per kWh and Rs52 per kWh, respectively, in June 2026. In comparison, the National Power Control Centre (NPCC) generated 151 GWh from RFO in June 2025 at Rs29 per kWh, indicating an increase of around 80 percent in RFO-based generation cost.

Generation from indigenous gas declined by 10.5 percent to 867 GWh in June 2026 at Rs13.6820 per kWh, compared to 968 GWh in June 2025.

RLNG-based generation also dropped sharply to 1,480 GWh (11.02 percent share) in June 2026 from 2,216 GWh in June 2025. Meanwhile, its cost rose to Rs35.51 per kWh from Rs21.87 per kWh, reflecting an increase of 62 percent.

In contrast, nuclear power generation recorded a significant increase of 31.5 percent, reaching 1,800 GWh (13.40 percent share) in June 2026 compared to 1,383 GWh in June 2025.

Pakistan imported 47 GWh of electricity from Iran during June 2026 for Rs27.6635 per kWh, compared to the same volume at Rs22.5155 per kWh in June 2025, marking a 23 percent increase in price.

Among renewable sources, wind power generation rose by 29.5 percent to 676 GWh from 522 GWh, while bagasse-based generation increased to 46 GWh from 35 GWh. Solar generations saw a marginal rise to 110 GWh from 106 GWh.

According to CPPA-G data, total electricity generation stood at 13,413 GWh in June 2026, down from 13,744 GWh in June 2025. Delivered energy was recorded at 13,066 GWh at an average cost of Rs8.9138 per kWh, compared to 13,310 GWh at Rs7.6800 per kWh in the corresponding month last year.

CPPA-G has sought a positive fuel cost adjustment (FCA) of Rs1.20 per kWh for June 2026, compared to Rs0.6541 per kWh in June 2025. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) is scheduled to conduct a public hearing on July 29, 2026.

NEPRA ALLOWS AEREM ENERGY TO SET UP HYBRID PROJECT AT DHABEJI

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has granted generation concurrence to Aerem Energy (Private) Limited (AEREPL) for setting up a 269MW hybrid renewable energy project at Dhabeji in District Thatta, Sindh, marking a key milestone in the country's transition towards cleaner energy sources.

According to an official determination issued on July 17, 2026, the Authority accorded concurrence under Section 14(B)(5) of the Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power Act, 1997, for the proposed wind and solar hybrid facility.

The project, with an installed capacity of 269MW, will be developed at Goth Dhori Jokhio near Dhabeji and is part of K-Electric's broader Power Acquisition Programme (PAP) aimed at diversifying its generation mix and increasing reliance on renewable energy.

Background documents reveal that K-Electric had included a site-neutral hybrid project in its PAP, which was approved by the Nepra in May 2024. Following a competitive bidding process, a consortium led by JCM Power Canada emerged as the lowest bidder and subsequently incorporated AEREPL as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to execute the project.

The hybrid project integrates wind and solar technologies, leveraging the strong wind corridor in the Gharo–Jhimpir region alongside solar irradiation to ensure optimal energy generation. Officials say this combination will enhance system reliability and reduce dependence on imported fuels.

K-Electric, in its comments to the regulator, highlighted that the project achieved a record-low tariff of Rs8.9189 per kWh (3.0899 US cents) and is expected to generate significant savings—estimated at Rs176 billion over the project's life—by displacing expensive thermal generation. The utility also projected foreign exchange savings of nearly USD 986 million.

The Energy Department of the Government of Sindh strongly supported the initiative, noting the province's vast untapped renewable energy potential. It emphasised that such projects not only contribute to energy security but also reduce exposure to volatile global fuel prices, while offering environmental and socio-economic benefits, including job creation and local development.

The project comprises approximately 175MW of wind power and 94MW of solar photovoltaic capacity, and is estimated to cost around USD 251 million. Financing is expected to be arranged through a mix of 80 percent debt and 20 percent equity, with local and international banks being approached for funding.

Nepra noted that the approval of concurrence will enable the project sponsors to move towards financial close and commence construction, subject to compliance with regulatory requirements, including the grid code and environmental standards.

The authority also observed that the project aligns with national renewable energy policies and will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy affordability, and enhancing the resilience of the power system.

With this approval, Pakistan takes another step toward its renewable energy targets, as policymakers increasingly push for indigenous, fuel-free generation to address the challenges of circular debt, high tariffs, and energy security.

In another decision, the Authority has approved a generation tariff of Rs8.9189/kWh for the project.

PETROL PRICE SURGES BY RS5.44, HSD'S BY RS31.05

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 4 hours ago

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Division on Friday announced new fuel prices effective from July 18 to July 20, highlighted by a sharp hike in high speed diesel (HSD) and a slight increase in petrol.

The price of HSD jumped by Rs 31.05 per litre, rising from Rs 323.30 to Rs 354.35. Whereas, petrol prices increased by Rs 5.44 per litre, bringing the new rate to Rs 316.15 per litre.

Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik said on Friday that the government has taken another step towards deregulation; OGRA will announce petroleum prices daily, based on Platts' 7-day moving average data.

OGRA will publish all international benchmarks & detailed calculation sheets on its website. Government to fix fuel prices daily due to renewed hostilities in Persian Gulf, the minister said.

The decision has faced immediate backlash from key industry stakeholders. The All Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association rejected the deregulation policy, warning it could disrupt fuel transportation, oil tanker operations, and the current pricing system. They urged the government to consult stakeholders before finalizing the move.

Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) expressed serious concerns, stating that the retail sector is not ready for such a major shift. They warned that daily price changes would complicate stock valuation, inventory management, and cash flow. Additionally, they cautioned that the move could hurt dealers' margins, trigger market uncertainty, and confuse consumers.

400 HOUSEHOLDS IN KARACHI: SSGC DISCONNECTS ILLEGAL GAS NETWORK

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 4 hours ago

KARACHI: Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has disconnected an illegal gas network supplying natural gas to around 400 households during an anti-gas theft operation in Karachi, the company said on Friday.

According to a statement, the raid was carried out by SSGC's Counter Gas Theft Operations (CGTO) team in coordination with the Customer Relations Department (CRD) Theft Section, Distribution Department, SSGC Police and local police at Kacha Road, opposite Masjid Ali Murtaza near Nipa Flyover in Block-11, Benazirabad.

The company said the operation uncovered a large-scale gas theft network in which suspects had illegally tapped into a two-inch high-pressure SSGC gas pipeline by installing a direct connection through a one-inch Muller-T plastic pipe. The illegal connection was supplying stolen natural gas to approximately 400 households.

SSGC said around 20 feet of the two-inch pipe used in the theft was recovered as evidence, while the unauthorized connection was disconnected on the spot.

According to preliminary investigations, the suspects were charging each household an advance payment of Rs20,000 for providing the illegal gas connection, in addition to a monthly fee of Rs2,500 for the continued unauthorized supply of natural gas.

PAKISTAN SEEKS MORE QATAR LNG CARGOES AMID STRAIT OF HORMUZ DISRUPTIONS: REPORT

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 21 hours ago

As the ongoing US-Iran conflict continues to disrupt energy shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, Pakistan plans to buy more liquefied natural gas (LNG) from its main supplier, Qatar, BLOOMBERG reported on Friday.

The government is finalising a strategy to purchase at least one LNG cargo from the spot market for delivery in July, and as many as six shipments for August, BLOOMBERG reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

The development comes as tensions escalate between Iran and the United States, which have stepped up attacks across the Gulf, limiting oil flows out of the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran is asking the Houthis to stand ready to shut the Red Sea export route.

Meanwhile, rising temperatures in Pakistan have raised power demand, even as solar output to the grid fell, forcing the government to increase reliance on LNG-fired generation, Muhammad Awais Ashraf, research director at AKD Securities, told BLOOMBERG.

The report said Pakistan's bid to secure more LNG may indicate that Islamabad expects the conflict to drag on.

Pakistan has struggled in recent years to secure LNG cargoes amid volatile global prices and supply disruptions, challenges that have intensified during the US-Iran conflict.

By early July 2026, Pakistan purchased an LNG shipment for July 10-11 delivery from TotalEnergies SE for $17.37/mmbtu, its second spot purchase in two weeks, to replace Qatari supplies disrupted by renewed hostilities in the Strait of Hormuz. Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) subsequently issued a tender for an urgent LNG cargo for July 15-16 delivery following the cancellation of a Qatari shipment.

OIL RISES ON RENEWED US-IRAN HOSTILITIES AND THREAT OF RED SEA CLOSURE

- Brent crude futures rose by $1.77, or 2.1%, to $86 a barrel

Published July 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

LONDON: Oil prices rose by more than 2% on Friday after the U.S. and Iran stepped up attacks across the Gulf, with shipping threatened by a potential Red Sea closure on top of the restricted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude futures rose by $1.77, or 2.1%, to $86 a barrel by 1158 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate futures were up $1.91, or 2.4%, at $80.86.

Both benchmarks have climbed about 13% this week, with Brent on track for a third consecutive weekly gain and WTI set for its second.

Diesel refining margins hit record highs on Friday, with low-sulphur gasoil futures touching $66.25 over Brent crude.

The Middle East is a major diesel exporter and the Hormuz closure, as well as attacks on oil refineries, have tightened fuel markets and bolstered prices globally.

The broken truce between the U.S. and Iran has resulted in a drop in oil flows out of the strait. Iran, meanwhile, has pressed the Houthi movement to close the Red Sea route if the U.S. strikes Iran's power infrastructure.

Transit through the Red Sea has increased significantly since the start of the Iran war because of rerouted Saudi oil exports away from Hormuz, Commerzbank analysts wrote.

"Should a blockade of the Strait of Bab al-Mandab occur in the wake of further escalation, the price of oil in particular is likely to rise further," they wrote.

Iran said it launched fresh strikes on U.S. facilities in the Middle East on Friday, including the first direct attack in Syria, after a sixth straight night of U.S. strikes on Iranian military facilities.

U.S. Central Command said on Thursday that American forces had begun a new wave of strikes against Iran to further degrade Iranian military capabilities.

"Oil security is still a critical issue," International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol said on Thursday at a Council on Foreign Relations event in Washington.

"We should be worried, and I am worried, if the situation does not improve in the next few weeks," he said.

Meanwhile, Qatar's defence ministry said its armed forces thwarted an Iranian missile attack early on Friday and the interior ministry said a child was injured by shrapnel resulting from interception operations.

One of Kuwait's power generation and water desalination stations was hit by an Iranian attack, Kuwait's electricity ministry said on Friday.

GOVERNMENT MASSIVELY INCREASES PETROL AND DIESEL PRICES FOR JULY 18, 2026

Written by

Faisal Shahnawaz

in

Energy, Top stories

Petrol rises by Rs5 per litre while diesel jumps Rs30 as government shifts to daily fuel price reviews amid Middle East tensions.

The federal government has announced a substantial increase in petrol and diesel prices for July 18, 2026, amid rising international oil prices and growing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

The revised rates will remain effective only for Saturday as authorities have introduced a new mechanism for reviewing petroleum prices on a daily basis.

Under the latest revision, the price of petrol has been increased by Rs5.44 per litre. The new rate stands at Rs316.15 per litre, compared to the previous price of Rs310.71 per litre.

The government has imposed a much steeper increase on high-speed diesel (HSD), raising its price by Rs31.05 per litre. Following the adjustment, diesel will be available at Rs354.35 per litre, up from Rs323.30 per litre.

The sharp rise in fuel prices comes at a time when global energy markets are experiencing heightened volatility due to escalating tensions in the Middle East. International crude oil prices have witnessed significant fluctuations in recent weeks, prompting governments around the world to reassess fuel pricing mechanisms.

Speaking at a press conference on Friday, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, accompanied by Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, said the government had decided to adopt a daily review system for petroleum prices to better respond to rapidly changing international market conditions.

According to the petroleum minister, concerns over global energy supplies have intensified as geopolitical developments in the Middle East continue to influence oil markets. He noted that diesel prices have been particularly affected by the surge in international petroleum rates.

Malik said the daily review mechanism would enable the government to ensure that domestic fuel prices accurately reflect movements in the global market.

The new approach is intended to provide greater flexibility in responding to sudden changes in international crude and refined petroleum product prices.

As part of the revised pricing framework, the federal government has assigned the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) the responsibility of determining petroleum product prices every day based on prevailing international market trends and relevant economic factors.

The move marks a significant shift in Pakistan's fuel pricing policy and is expected to have a direct impact on transportation costs, inflation, and overall economic activity in the coming days.

PAKISTAN TO REVIEW PETROL PRICES DAILY AMID MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

Written by

Faisal Shahnawaz

in

Energy, Top stories

OGRA to determine fuel prices daily using international market trends as government pushes for greater transparency and deregulation.

The federal government has decided to review petroleum prices on a daily basis in response to sharp fluctuations in international oil markets, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik announced on Friday.

Speaking at a press conference alongside Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Malik said rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have intensified concerns over global energy supplies, leading to significant increases in international oil prices, particularly diesel.

As part of a broader reform agenda, the government has assigned the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) the responsibility of determining petroleum product prices every day based on prevailing international market conditions.

The move is aimed at improving transparency and further deregulating the fuel pricing mechanism in Pakistan.

The minister said that under the new framework, OGRA will not only notify daily fuel prices but will also publicly share the calculations and market indicators used to determine the rates charged at fuel stations across the country.

"Consumers will be able to see the factors behind petroleum price adjustments, helping them better understand how fuel prices are calculated," Malik stated.

He acknowledged that daily price revisions could occasionally result in higher costs for consumers. However, he emphasized that increased transparency would provide clarity on the reasons behind such adjustments and strengthen public confidence in the pricing system.

Malik reiterated the government's commitment to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's policy of transferring the benefits of lower international oil prices directly to consumers whenever global markets ease.

Highlighting past trends, he noted that Pakistan had previously experienced substantial reductions in fuel prices when international crude oil prices declined. According to the minister, diesel prices had fallen from around Rs520 per litre to nearly Rs300 per litre, while petrol prices had dropped by Rs70 to Rs80 per litre during periods of lower global oil rates.

Addressing concerns regarding fuel taxation, Malik said petroleum levy and carbon support levy rates on petrol and diesel remain comparatively modest. He added that the government is working to improve fiscal transparency while gradually reducing reliance on indirect taxation.

Under the proposed mechanism, petroleum prices will be calculated using a rolling seven-day average of international fuel prices. This system is intended to automatically reflect global market movements without requiring approval from ministers or other government officials.

"This reform is another step toward deregulation, ensuring that fuel prices are adjusted according to international market realities without political intervention," the minister said.

Malik revealed that a committee established by the prime minister and headed by him has already held four meetings to evaluate and reform the country's petroleum pricing structure.

He further disclosed that the government plans to finalize a comprehensive post-conflict energy pricing and energy security framework within the next 15 to 20 days. The proposed architecture is expected to serve as a long-term roadmap for Pakistan's energy sector reforms.

The minister also stressed the importance of reducing Pakistan's dependence on imported energy sources and called for stronger measures to enhance domestic energy security and long-term sustainability.

Rates

GEOPOLITICAL CONCERNS PULL PSX DOWN

Published July 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) ended the week on a weak note on Friday as investors resorted to widespread profit-taking ahead of the weekend amid lingering geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, dragging the benchmark KSE-100 Index lower by more than 2,300 points after two consecutive sessions of strong gains.

The benchmark KSE-100 Index declined by 2,320.78 points, or 1.30 percent, to settle at 175,802.79 points compared with the previous close of 178,123.57 points. The market remained volatile throughout the session, touching an intraday high of 178,694.49 points before heavy selling pushed the index to an intraday low of 175,790.63 points.

Business Recorder indices mirrored the negative trend. The BRIndex100 closed at 19,299.72 points, losing 272.71 points, or 1.39 percent, on a turnover of 510.22 million shares. Meanwhile, the BRIndex30 declined by 1,199.66 points, or 1.69 percent, to close at 69,867.09 points with a total turnover of 330.27 million shares.

Commenting on the day's trading activity, Ali Najib, Deputy Head of Trading at Arif Habib Limited, said the market traded on a mixed note during the day, with selective buying seen during the morning session before profit-taking emerged in the latter half as investors booked gains ahead of the weekend. He said elevated geopolitical tensions also weighed on investor sentiment following fresh exchanges of strikes between the United States and Iran, prompting a cautious stance among market participants.

According to Najib, ENGROH, Systems Limited (SYS), UBL, OGDC, PPL, HUBC, MEBL, HBL and Lucky Cement remained under selling pressure and collectively shaved 1,105 points off the benchmark index.

Overall trading activity moderated compared with the previous session. Ready market turnover declined to 621.02 million shares from 736.96 million shares, while traded value dropped to Rs29.88 billion against Rs34.61 billion recorded a day earlier. The sell-off wiped out more than Rs249.5 billion from market capitalization, which fell to Rs19.79 trillion from Rs20.04 trillion.

Market breadth remained decisively negative. Of the 497 companies traded on the ready market, only 101 advanced, while 367 declined and 29 remained unchanged.

Among the most actively traded stocks, Cnergyico PK led the volume chart with 86.49 million shares, closing higher at Rs9.81. It was followed by TPL Properties with 62.55 million shares, closing at Rs12.10, and Pakistan Refinery with 38.58 million shares, which ended the day at Rs44.59.

On the gainers' list, PIA Holding Company Limited (B) rose by Rs329.17 to close at Rs18,102.67, while Khyber Textile Mills Limited gained Rs138.05 to settle at Rs2,199.38. On the losing side, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited declined by Rs207.94 to Rs1,871.47, while Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited shed Rs151.33 to close at Rs9,248.79.

Sector-wise, the BR Tech & Communication Index led the decline, falling by 76.48 points, or 2.03 percent, to 3,688.50 points on turnover of 59.53 million shares. The BR Oil and Gas Index lost 233.21 points, or 1.55 percent, to settle at 14,806.13 points on turnover of 43.93 million shares.

The BR Cement Index dropped 202.88 points, or 1.61 percent, to close at 12,376.10 points with 36.45 million shares traded. The BR Power Generation and Distribution Index declined by 482.87 points, or 1.71 percent, to 27,820.36 points on turnover of 33.35 million shares.

The BR Commercial Banks Index fell 763.06 points, or 1.23 percent, to 61,325.25 points with turnover of 29.77 million shares, while the BR Automobile Assembler Index slipped 112.70 points, or 0.47 percent, to close at 23,622.12 points on turnover of 1.67 million shares.

Market participants expect sentiment to remain cautious in the coming sessions as investors closely monitor geopolitical developments in the Middle East. However, analysts believe the ongoing corporate earnings season and relatively attractive valuations in selected blue-chip stocks may continue to provide support to the market despite heightened external uncertainties.

OPEN MARKET FOREX RATES

Updated at: 18/7/2026 8:32 AM (PST)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.48	205.17
Bahrain Dinar	741.05	751.95
Canadian Dollar	197.72	201.65
China Yuan	38.05	38.80
Danish Krone	42.56	43.25
Euro	321.04	324.40
Hong Kong Dollar	35.24	36.25
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.7114	1.8100
Kuwaiti Dinar	890.02	900.95
Malaysian Ringgit	67.00	68.05
NewZealand $	161.20	163.75
Norwegians Krone	27.99	28.29
Omani Riyal	725.81	735.65
Qatari Riyal	75.45	76.47
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.30
Singapore Dollar	214.85	217.85
Swedish Korona	28.25	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.59	348.25
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.80
U.A.E Dirham	76.30	77.00
UK Pound Sterling	376.31	379.15
US Dollar	278.95	279.15

INTER BANK RATES

Updated at: 18/7/2026 8:32 AM (PST)

Currency	**Bank Buying TT Clean**	**Bank Selling TT & OD**
Australian Dollar	194	194.35
Canadian Dollar	197.95	198.30
China Yuan	41	41.08
Danish Krone	42.52	42.60
Euro	317.83	318.40
Hong Kong Dollar	35.44	35.50
Japanese Yen	1.7110	1.7141
Saudi Riyal	74	74.13
Singapore Dollar	215.31	215.70
Swedish Korona	28.64	28.70
Swiss Franc	343.49	344.11
Thai Bhat	8.27	8.28
UK Pound Sterling	374.15	374.82
US Dollar	277.85	278.35

GOLD RATE

Bullion / Gold Price Today

As on Thu, Jun 11 2026, 19:58 GMT

Metal	Symbol	PKR for 10 Gm	PKR for 1 Tola	PKR for 1 Ounce	
Gold	XAU	369,170	430,143	1,148,267	
Palladium	XPD	111,193	129,558	345,856	
Platinum	XPT	151,992	177,095	472,756	
Silver	XAG	5,808	6,767	18,064	

for local market Gold Rates in Pakistan

Gold Price in Pakistan

As on Thu, Jun 11 2026, 19:58 GMT

Gold Rate	24K Gold	22K Gold	21K Gold	18K Gold
per Tola Gold	Rs. 430100	Rs. 394255	Rs. 376338	Rs. 322575
per 10 Gram	Rs. 368800	Rs. 338064	Rs. 322700	Rs. 276600
per Gram Gold	Rs. 36880	Rs. 33806	Rs. 32270	Rs. 27660
per Ounce	Rs. 1045500	Rs. 958368	Rs. 914813	Rs. 784125

Gold Rate

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* Above Gold rate are taken from International Market so there may be some fluctuation from Local Market you can visit GOLD.pk for uptodate today gold price in Pakistan.

Gold Rates in other Major Currencies

Currency	Symbol	10 Gm	1 Tola	1 Ounce	
China Yuan	CNY	8,985	10,469	27,946	
Euro	EUR	1,148	1,338	3,572	
Japanese Yen	JPY	212,825	247,976	661,972	
Saudi Riyal	SAR	4,973	5,794	15,468	
U.A.E Dirham	AED	4,870	5,675	15,148	
UK Pound Sterling	GBP	990	1,154	3,081	
US Dollar	USD	1,326	1,545	4,125	