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SLD NEWS UPDATES

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Budget 2026-27

'UNDERSTANDING OF BUDGET DOCUMENTS ESSENTIAL FOR LEGISLATION'

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: Effective oversight of public resources is a guarantee of a strong democracy while a proper understanding of budget documents is essential for informed and effective legislation.

Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan expressed these views while addressing, as chief guest, a two-day 'budget literacy workshop' organized for members of the Punjab Assembly to promote effective legislation on the budget, sound financial management, and effective oversight of public resources.

A large number of honorable members of the Punjab Assembly participated in the workshop. The Speaker stated that the protection of public interest can be ensured through constructive debate, transparent accountability, and effective parliamentary oversight. He observed that enhancing the capacity of elected representatives is the need of the hour and that effective parliamentary oversight during the budget-making process promotes transparent governance.

During the workshop, renowned economist Dr. Hafiz A. Pasha delivered a detailed briefing on the current economic situation in Punjab. He stressed the importance of safeguarding investment in the education, health, and development sectors.

Furthermore, former Provincial Irrigation Minister Mohsin Laghari conducted a special session on understanding budget documents in a simple and practical manner.

The objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of members of the assembly in financial oversight, budget analysis, and effective legislation, enabling them to play an active role in ensuring the transparent, efficient, and responsible use of public resources. The workshop was organized in collaboration with UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

PUNJAB BUDGET

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EDITORIAL: The Punjab budget envisages total revenue of 1209 billion rupees from own resources (only 749 billion rupees from taxes and 461 million rupees as non-tax

revenue) against the revised estimates of 820 billion rupees in the outgoing fiscal year – a significant rise of 47.5 percent.

Sales tax collections on services, passed on in its entirety to the clients/consumers, an indirect tax, to boot, whose incidence on the poor is greater than on the rich, are budgeted to rise to 521 billion rupees next year against 363.5 billion rupees collected in the revised estimates of the current year (though the budgeted target for the current year was lower at 333.5 billion rupees) – a 43 percent rise. This encapsulates higher tax on IT services, transport and professional services (from 5 to 8 percent), a 3 percent new tax on foreign exchange services (that is likely to impact the middle to lower income levels) and 8 percent on event management (though input tax adjustment has not been factored in).

Actual collection with respect to agriculture income tax for next fiscal year is a paltry 12.5 billion rupees against 3.99 billion rupees collected in the outgoing year though the budgeted amount was 10.5 billion rupees. The budget, however, claims upward revisions in this tax: those with more than 12.5 acres of land would pay a flat rate of 1,000 per acre, up from 300 rupees per acre for 12.5 to 25 acres, 400 rupees per acre for 25 to 50 acres, and 500 rupees per acre for above 50 acres. Tax on irrigated orchards would rise from 600 rupees to 1,000 rupees per acres and on non-irrigated orchards from 300 rupees to 500 rupees per acre. This is a far cry from the need to bring the tax at par with a specific farm's income to be levied at the same rate as payable by the salaried.

Given that Punjab is the bread basket of the country with a large number of absentee landlords who are overwhelmingly represented in the provincial assembly, the small projected revenue from this source may not be met at the end of next fiscal year – a projection based on the outgoing year's collection of only 38 percent of what was budgeted.

The agricultural income tax collection must be seen in the context of 10.6 billion-rupees subsidy to the farm sector, and included in the Fiscal Risks Statement 2026-27 is the following: 7.3 billion rupee subsidized diesel to support farmers, 1.7 billion rupees for subsidized petrol to motorcyclists and 0.75 billion rupee free public transport services throughout Punjab.

These higher than the outgoing year's budgeted projections are not in line with the pledge made to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted in the May 2026 staff level agreement on the third review of the ongoing Extended Fund Facility programme: "At the provincial level, revenue mobilization will continue to focus on broadening the GST tax base on services and the application of higher income tax rates on agricultural income."

The budget envisages a 19 percent increase in non-tax revenue mainly from Cash Management Fund that was set up under the Punjab Public Financial Management Act 2022 to manage Punjab's liquidity and budget execution and has increased from 800 billion rupees to 1.2 trillion rupees. It is funded and replenished from productive investments and parking of idle cash balance, surplus provincial revenue and unutilized funds from the provincial consolidated fund. In addition, higher revenue is budgeted to be generated from police due to enhanced traffic fines (2.8 billion rupees), increased revenue from royalties, release of NHP arrears by the Centre and anticipated profits from Punjab Pension Fund established in 2024 through employee contributions effective for those hired from 2024 onwards, though the exact amount has not been quantified.

The budget shows a surplus of 910 billion rupees, higher than the total provincial tax receipts of 749 billion rupees, a surplus that was required to meet the federal budget's demands geared to meeting the commitment with the IMF.

The expenditure outlay is mainly on current expenditure at 3.29 trillion rupees while development outlay is budgeted at 752 billion rupees or 12.7 percent of the total – lower than the Centre's percentage allocation of 93 percent on current expenditure. It is relevant to note that the rise in development outlay, supported as it is, gives Punjab's share in the downward revised provincial public sector development programme as noted in the federal budget at only 38 percent – lower than its share in the divisible pool, which is 51.74 percent – a share that no doubt is rooted in Punjab budget's overarching objective to meet the federal budget's requirements as pledged to the IMF.

To conclude, this may not be the final outlay if there are unforeseen liabilities associated with exogenous factors and the Punjab budget echoes what is in the federal budget: "expenditure restraint will also be essential, with primary spending remaining flat as a share of GDP in FY27, while increasing targeted cash transfers and health and education spending ratios. Further, expenditure compression (including lower-priority capital spending) may be needed if risks to revenue mobilization materialize."

PUNJAB'S WELFARE BUDGET VISION

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By Qudrat UllahPartner Content

Punjab's Budget 2026-27, presented by Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman in the Provincial Assembly, reflects the provincial government's effort to combine fiscal discipline with an expansive social and development agenda. With a total outlay of Rs 5,903.5 billion, the budget is the largest in Punjab's history and represents a 10.7 percent increase over the previous fiscal year.

More than a statement of accounts, it offers a clear indication of the government's priorities under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif: public welfare, infrastructure development, human capital investment and economic modernisation.

A notable feature of the budget is the continuation of the government's policy of avoiding new taxes. At a time when households and businesses continue to face economic pressures, the decision not to impose additional provincial taxes has been presented as an effort to support economic activity while relying on improved governance, digitisation and enhanced compliance to strengthen revenue collection. Provincial own-source revenues are projected at Rs 1,209.9 billion, while federal transfers under the NFC Award are expected to remain the principal source of revenue. The province has also committed a surplus of Rs 546 billion in line with national fiscal commitments.

The development agenda remains substantial. The Annual Development Programme (ADP) has been set at Rs 752 billion, including significant allocations for foreign-funded projects. Despite fiscal constraints, the provincial government has maintained a strong focus on sectors that directly affect citizens' quality of life.

Education emerges as one of the foremost priorities. The sector has been allocated Rs 750 billion, accounting for a significant share of provincial spending. The allocation supports initiatives aimed at improving access, quality and digital learning opportunities. Programmes such as the Chief Minister's Laptop Scheme, merit-based scholarships, new higher education projects and investments in science and technology education reflect a long-term commitment to preparing Punjab's youth for a competitive economy. At a time when knowledge and innovation increasingly drive economic growth, such investments carry strategic significance.

Healthcare also receives major attention, with approximately Rs 500 billion allocated for the sector. The budget includes substantial funding for the provision of free medicines in public hospitals and for the expansion of specialised healthcare facilities. Ongoing investments in cancer treatment centres, children's healthcare and primary healthcare services seek to improve both access and quality of care. The government's emphasis on health infrastructure acknowledges that social development and economic productivity are closely linked to the well-being of citizens.

Agriculture, the backbone of Punjab's economy, remains a key beneficiary of public spending. Resources have been earmarked for farmer support initiatives, including the Kisan Card, Green Tractor Scheme and measures to reduce production costs. Continued support for tube-well solarisation and livestock development programmes demonstrates recognition of the sector's central role in employment, food security and rural prosperity. These interventions are designed not only to provide relief but also to improve productivity and sustainability in the long run.

The budget also reinforces Punjab's social protection framework. Allocations for targeted subsidies and welfare programmes aim to support vulnerable groups and low-income households. Schemes such as Himmat Cards, Minority Cards and other social assistance initiatives reflect an effort to extend the benefits of economic development to segments of society that often remain excluded from growth.

Youth empowerment features prominently in the Punjab government's policy vision. Investments in AI and IT, entrepreneurship, skills development and employment generation seek to equip young people with market-relevant capabilities. Such programmes are particularly important in a province where a large proportion of the population is under the age of thirty and where employment opportunities must expand in line with demographic realities.

Punjab Government employees have also been provided relief through a proposed seven percent increase in salaries and a 3.5 percent increase in pensions. While modest in comparison with inflationary pressures, these measures nonetheless acknowledge the financial challenges faced by public servants and pensioners.

Taken together, Punjab's Budget 2026-27 presents a governance philosophy centred on welfare, holistic development and institutional reform. It attempts to balance fiscal responsibility with ambitious public investment while avoiding additional tax burdens on citizens. Whether measured through schools, hospitals, agricultural support programmes or social protection initiatives, the budget seeks to translate public resources into tangible improvements in people's lives. In that sense, it is not merely a new financial document but a statement of priorities and an indicator of the direction in which the province intends to move during the coming year.

HEATED EXCHANGES DISRUPT NA BUDGET PROCEEDINGS

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Naveed ButtZulfiqar Ahmad

ISLAMABAD: A routine sitting of the National Assembly's budget session on Wednesday descended into heated exchanges between government and the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers, with repeated interruptions, raised voices and procedural disputes disrupting proceedings.

The flashpoint erupted during proceedings when Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Rana Tanveer Hussain engaged in a heated verbal exchange with lawmakers from the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), turning what began as policy criticism into a full-blown shouting match on the House floor.

What started as routine opposition grilling escalated rapidly into a barrage of interruptions and pointed remarks, with the Speaker repeatedly struggling – and largely failing – to restore order as voices from both sides drowned out formal proceedings.

The confrontation soon moved well beyond legislative debate. In a particularly charged moment, Rana Tanveer Hussain challenged PTI lawmakers to put forward their incarcerated founding chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan in an electoral contest against him, while accusing the opposition of "reaping what it has sown" amid the country's ongoing political turbulence.

The remarks further inflamed an already volatile atmosphere, with the chamber echoing with interjections as the minister's claim that "we are also elected representatives" was effectively lost in the noise of ongoing disruptions.

The Speaker made repeated attempts to bring proceedings back under control, issuing calls for order as tempers refused to cool.

A brief moment of calm followed after Rana Tanveer Hussain expressed regret over his remarks, an apology later accepted by PTI's acting chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan – offering only a temporary pause in an otherwise combustible session.

But the restraint did not last long. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry soon became embroiled in a separate confrontation again with opposition PTI lawmakers, accusing them of deliberately sabotaging proceedings through constant heckling and refusing to be silenced.

"If debate is underway, it is the opposition that creates noise," he said – a remark that instead of cooling tensions appeared to pour fuel on them, drawing sharper responses from across the benches.

As disorder spread again through the chamber, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) MNA Mir Aamir Ali Khan Magsi stepped in to urge immediate intervention from the NA Speaker, warning that the House was rapidly slipping into "unmanageable chaos" and needed urgent restraint before the situation deteriorated further.

What remained of the sitting continued under a cloud of disorder, underscoring once again how fragile parliamentary decorum has become amid deepening political hostility.

NA WITNESSES HEATED DEBATE ON FEDERAL BUDGET

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Naveed ButtZulfiqar Ahmad

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly witnessed a heated clash over Federal Budget 2026-27, with opposition calling it "anti-poor" amid inflation and debt fears, while the government defended it as reform-driven, agriculture-focused, and macroeconomic stabilisation under tight external constraints.

The ongoing budget debate, marked by sharp exchanges, political undertones and repeated references to electoral legitimacy, saw acting PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan lead the opposition's charge, while Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain mounted a forceful defence of the government's agriculture-centred economic strategy.

Taking part in the budget debate, Barrister Gohar opened his remarks by lamenting what he called a strained and mistrustful parliamentary atmosphere, saying the House had failed to begin its proceedings on a constructive footing.

Welcoming what he described as an overture for dialogue by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he questioned the apparent stagnation in negotiations and sought clarity on what was holding the process back.

He also reiterated the opposition's demand for access to jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, keeping political grievances firmly on the table alongside the budget debate.

He also raised the issue of internal parliamentary tensions, criticising the suspension of MNA Iqbal Afridi and arguing that elected members should not be sidelined in such a manner.

On the budget itself, Gohar dismissed it as structurally indifferent to lower-income groups, arguing that it offered "nothing for the poor" and would likely intensify inflationary pressures.

He warned that essential commodities – including wheat flour, electricity and medicines – would become more expensive in the coming months, further squeezing already strained household budgets.

Despite the presence of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), he argued, poverty indicators continued to worsen.

In one of the more politically charged moments of his speech, he responded to remarks by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, questioning whether the minister's "conscience was not burdened" by the events surrounding the 8 February elections, which he again characterised as deeply controversial.

He further alleged that around 100 PTI members had been disqualified and replaced through what he described as engineered judicial and electoral processes.

Responding for the government, Rana Tanveer Hussain defended the budget as a "balanced and reform-oriented" package that had been positively received by the business community despite difficult fiscal space under ongoing IMF-linked arrangements.

He stressed that agriculture remained the "centre of gravity" of the government's economic strategy, both for growth and food security.

He outlined an ambitious reform agenda for the sector, including mechanisation, seed regulation, institutional restructuring and expansion of value-added exports.

Cooperation with Chinese agricultural institutions, he said, was helping modernise the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and develop climate-resilient seed varieties suited to changing environmental conditions.

Providing details of regulatory action, he told the House that the government had reviewed the seed sector after taking office in 2024, cancelling licences of around 450 companies found involved in irregularities out of nearly 1,100 registered firms.

A new National Seed Regulatory Authority, he said, had been established to tighten oversight and ensure certified inputs for farmers.

He also said that the "Zarkhaiz Scheme", under which small farmers owning less than 25 acres would be provided collateral-free loans, while tenant farmers and sharecroppers would also be eligible through personal guarantees.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), he added, had been directed to ensure that agricultural credit actually reached smallholders rather than being captured by large agribusinesses.

He noted that long-delayed National Seed Policy and Biotechnology Policy had finally been approved after nearly four decades of administrative stagnation.

Highlighting diversification efforts, he said the olive sector had emerged as a surprise success story, generating exports worth $80 million, with ambitions to scale this to $1 billion in the coming years.

He also announced a district-level development initiative targeting 10 underdeveloped districts, offering direct financial support, livestock assistance and Rs15,000 per acre in input subsidies.

He said farmers' producer organisations would be encouraged to form cooperatives to cut costs and improve machinery access, noting 95pc are smallholders, alongside a 60pc subsidy on agricultural machinery to boost mechanisation.

He said no new agriculture taxes were imposed and fertiliser supply remained stable despite global disruptions, while highlighting Punjab's Kissan Card for around 800,000 farmers, Sindh's Rs52 billion allocation, KP's Rs26 billion package, and Balochistan's focus on storage and value addition.

PPP MNA Shazia Marri highlighted her party's alignment with the Charter of Democracy and pointed to the BISP as a globally recognised model of social protection and women's empowerment. However, opposition voices remained unconvinced.

Rana Ansar Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) criticised the budget for inadequate attention to women's welfare and said the proposed seven per cent salary increase was insufficient amid persistent inflation.

Khurram Shahzad of PPP called for urgent reforms in public education, warning that deteriorating infrastructure and teacher training gaps were undermining learning outcomes.

Naz Baloch, another PPP MNA, pressed for stronger investment in climate resilience and information technology, describing both as essential pillars of future employment generation.

PML-N's Riazul Haq supported relief measures for the construction sector but cautioned that Pakistan required sustained growth of six to seven per cent to ensure long-term economic stability.

PTI's Shafqat Abbas dismissed the economic and agriculture strategy as ineffective in delivering meaningful relief.

Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto of PPP urged a reduction in non-development expenditure to expand the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), while endorsing increased allocations for BISP.

Muhammad Numan of PML-N, however, supported the budget, calling it growth-oriented and focused on reviving both agriculture and industry, with potential to generate employment for young people.

Zain Qureshi, viewed as a controversial figure within PTI ranks and previously linked to internal disputes over the 26th Constitutional Amendment in October 2024, rejected the budget as "anti-poor", saying macroeconomic stabilisation had come at the expense of rising social distress.

He said this was the fifth budget under Prime Minister Sharif, yet growth had remained stuck between two and three per cent.

He claimed poverty had risen from 21 to 23 per cent, unemployment was worsening, and nearly 700,000 young people were leaving the country each year in search of opportunities abroad.

He also questioned the value of international praise for Pakistan's leadership, including remarks attributed to US President Donald Trump, asking what tangible benefit such endorsements brought to ordinary citizens.

He further claimed Pakistan had accumulated more debt in four years than in the previous seven decades combined, citing rising electricity tariffs, ballooning circular debt and inefficiencies in the power sector.

Lawmakers from both the treasury benches and the opposition joined the ongoing budget debate, turning the proceedings into a heated exchange of accusations and counterclaims, with rhetoric often overshadowing substantive policy discussion as political fault lines deepened on the assembly floor.

PUNJAB GOVT HAS COMPLETELY SIDELINED AGRI SECTOR IN BUDGET: PTI

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Zulfiqar Ahmad

ISLAMABAD: The opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday lashed out at the Punjab government over its 2026-27 budget, alleging that it sidelines the agriculture sector and reflects what it termed a shift from serious economic planning to political theatre.

In a statement, PTI spokesman Sheikh Waqas Akram said the budget reflects a "deep indifference" to agriculture, despite its central role in the country's economy, alleging that farmers have been left to grapple with rising costs, heatwaves and failing irrigation systems while the government focuses on publicity and optics.

With heavy sarcasm, he said the authorities appeared more interested in "self-congratulatory messaging" than addressing structural problems in the sector.

"While farmers battle soaring input costs and water shortages, this regime seems busy distributing slogans instead of solutions," he remarked.

He also cited what he claimed were deteriorating external trade indicators, saying food imports had risen by around 15% to more than USD7 billion, while exports had fallen by 34% to roughly USD3.8 billion, leaving what he

called a widening hole in foreign exchange earnings.

KP GOVT TO ACHIEVE 100PC UPLIFT FUNDS UTILIZATION TARGET

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By Recorder Report

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is likely to achieve the target of 100 percent utilization of released development funds shortly.

The meeting was informed that the Merged Districts ADP currently leads in terms of fund utilization, with 94 percent of released funds expended to date. Similarly, utilization under the Accelerated Implementation Programme has reached 92 percent, while 88 percent of released funds under the provincial ADP have been utilized.

This was told during a high-level meeting held here at CM House with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi in chair to assess the utilization of development funds and progress on key development initiatives across the province.

The meeting undertook a comprehensive review of expenditures and implementation progress under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual Development Programme (ADP), the Merged Districts Annual Development Programme, the Accelerated Implementation Programme (AIP), and various foreign-assisted development projects.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress achieved thus far, the Chief Minister directed all concerned departments to ensure the timely completion of ongoing projects so that citizens can benefit from development investments at the earliest opportunity.

"Timely completion of development projects is essential for accelerating economic growth, improving public service delivery, and strengthening governance outcomes across the province," the Chief Minister stated.

Sohail Afridi reiterated that health and education remain among the provincial government's highest development priorities, adding that the upcoming Annual Development Programme will continue to place particular emphasis on these sectors, alongside other critical social services.

He underscored that the provision of quality healthcare services is a fundamental responsibility of the government and emphasized that no compromise would be made on improving access to essential health services for citizens.

The Chief Minister noted that the growing patient burden on major hospitals in Peshawar necessitates enhanced attention, strategic planning, and targeted investments in the health sector.

He stated that the provincial government is pursuing a comprehensive approach to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and service delivery to meet increasing public demand.

Reaffirming the government's development agenda, Sohail Afridi stated that projects of significant public importance, particularly those nearing completion, would be prioritized to ensure that development gains are realized and delivered to communities without delay.

He further emphasized the provincial government's commitment to ensuring the transparent, efficient, and timely utilization of development resources, adding that all available efforts would be directed towards extending the benefits of development investments to every region and segment of society across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SINDH CUTS DEVELOPMENT BUDGET BY 30PC

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By Rizwan Bhatti

KARACHI: The Sindh government has announced a 30 percent reduction in its development budget for the next fiscal year (FY27), with the cut to be absorbed across all development components.

Due to geopolitical tensions in the Gulf, rising economic uncertainty, fiscal constraints, and Sindh's austerity measures, no new schemes will be included in ADP 2026-27 except carried-forward unapproved schemes from ADP 2025–26.

According to the budget estimates, the Sindh government has proposed the development expenditure amounted to Rs 720.385 billion for FY27, recording a sharp decline of 30 percent over this year's (FY26) development portfolio of Rs1.018 trillion.

This year, ADP implementation was slowed by limited fund utilisation due to resource constraints and operational challenges. With 1,381 schemes fully funded and nearing completion, the total development budget for FY26 has been revised from Rs. 1.018 trillion to Rs 944 billion.

Budget Estimates for next fiscal year for Provincial Annual Development Programme (ADP) has been decreased to Rs 385 billion against last year's budget of Rs 520 billion. Next year's budget estimates for district ADP have been proposed to be Rs.15 billion for FY27 down from Rs 55 billion of FY26.

However, budget estimates for FY27 for Foreign Project Assistance (FPA) component also declined from Rs 366.7 billion to Rs. 256.055 billion for the next fiscal year. In addition, Rs. 64.33 billion has been proposed for the Federal PSDP for the next year's budget down Rs 76.58 billion of this fiscal year.

The provincial ADP for this fiscal year was initially approved at Rs 520 billion, however due to adjustments in federal funding amid regional conflict, revised estimates have been set at Rs. 440 billion.

Priority was given to schemes nearing completion, key social sector interventions, and projects focused on rehabilitating flood-damaged infrastructure across the province.

In the current financial year, 1,066 schemes across various departments under ADP FY26 have been completed. Of the 473 new schemes introduced, approved projects will continue as ongoing schemes in ADP FY27.

The development budget in FY26 was allocated to align with government priorities and achieve targeted socio-economic outcomes. While 480 new schemes were added to ADP 2025-26, the main focus remained on completing existing projects, especially after the 2022 floods. Resources were directed toward rehabilitating community infrastructure such as roads, education and health facilities, housing, 36 water supply and sanitation, agriculture, livestock, and irrigation networks damaged by recurring floods.

Under the ADP 2026-27, sector-wise allocations have been outlined across key development areas, with the largest share of Rs. 121.663 billion (26.2 percent) earmarked for Local Government, including mega projects in water & sanitation and roads. The Education Sector has been allocated Rs. 25.860 billion (6.80 percent), while the Health Sector will receive Rs 17.433 billion (4.60 percent). Public Health Engineering and Rural Development have been allocated Rs. 40.86 billion (10.70 percent), followed by Transport & Communication at Rs. 39.536 billion (10.4 percent) and Irrigation at Rs. 30.94 billion (8.14 percent). The Agriculture sector, including livestock, has been allocated Rs. 6.30 billion, accounting for 1.66 percent of the total ADP size.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in his budget speech informed that the Sindh Development Portfolio Management System (SDPMS) is a transformative digital platform and dashboard developed by the Planning & Development Board of Sindh.

SINDH EARMARKS RS6.195BN FOR TRANSPORT MODERNISATION

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government has earmarked significant funding in its budget 2026-27 to expand public transport services, accelerate the shift to electric mobility and modernise fare collection systems across the province.

"Approximately Rs6.195 billion have been proposed to modernise transport facilities," said Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who also holds portfolio of finance.

He said the People's Bus Service network has grown to 290 operational buses, with new routes launched in Khairpur, Shikarpur, Tando Allahyar and Hyderabad. The service is now carrying around 125,000 passengers daily and has transported more than 41 million passengers since its launch.

The Pink Bus Service, Pakistan's first women-exclusive public transport initiative, has expanded to 28 buses operating on five routes in Karachi. Dedicated Pink Buses on the Green Line corridor are also serving approximately 1,500 women commuters daily.

As part of efforts to promote environmentally sustainable transport, 34 electric minibuses became operational during FY2025-26, while five double-decker buses were added to Karachi's road network.

The provincial government plans to induct another 100 electric buses, expected to serve more than 50,000 passengers daily, he said.

Under the People's Green Transport Programme, procurement of the first 500 electric buses under a broader 1,000-bus electric vehicle programme is underway through a public-private partnership model.

To support transport operations, the government has allocated Rs1.8 billion for dollar parity adjustments under the Sindh Intra-District People's Bus Service Project, while Rs1.68 billion has been earmarked for fuel cost indexation. An additional Rs175 million has been set aside as grant-in-aid for utility expenses.

The budget also includes Rs825 million for the acquisition of 50 electric buses on a rent-to-own basis and Rs1.65 billion for the supply, construction, operation and maintenance of 100 electric buses.

Meanwhile, Rs64.62 million has been allocated for operational expenses related to the procurement and operation of public transport buses through the National Energy & Transport Corporation (NETC) under a government-to-government arrangement.

Shah said the government said the Automated Fare Collection System has already been implemented on Green Line, Orange Line and People's Bus Service routes, paving the way for a unified Intelligent Transport System across Sindh.

RS620BN ALLOCATED FOR EDUCATION SECTOR

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government allocated a sum of Rs620 billion for the education sector in its budget for the fiscal year 2026-27.

In the Annual Development Plan (ADP), the education sector received Rs25.86 billion for the fiscal year 2026-27, which is 6.8 percent as compared with the outgoing fiscal year.

Alongside this amount, the government has set aside a School Specific Budget Allocation of Rs22.64 billion.

Funding for educational supplies will increase by 100 percent, rising from Rs3.81 billion to Rs7.62 billion across accounts under the school-specific budget.

This allocation aligns with the 2026 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, "Access and equity: countdown to 2030." To support progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 4, the government has earmarked Rs1.5 billion.

The budget outlines funding for specific areas across school, vocational, and college education:

STEAM Education: The government has integrated STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) into the curriculum. It has allocated Rs1 million to scale up these initiatives and the STEAM Muqablo competition.

Textbook Distribution: The government has allocated Rs5,000 million for the distribution of textbooks to students from pre-primary to Class X. Additionally, Rs850 million is allocated for reimbursement to the Sindh Textbook Board to supply textbooks to the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) for public and SEF-assisted schools.

STEVTA: The grant for the Sindh Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority has been increased to Rs3,515.18 million for FY 2026-27, compared to Rs2,550 million in FY 2025-26.

College Education: The budget for College Education is proposed at Rs41.4 billion. This incorporates Rs1.3 billion for 13 Cadet Colleges in Sindh and Rs120.00 million for grants-in-aid to four community colleges.

The government has allocated Rs7.4 billion to the Universities & Boards Department, which includes Rs6.8 billion to cover registration, enrollment, and examination fees for Classes IX to XII across seven boards.

Additionally, funding for the Sindh Higher Education Commission has risen from Rs42.29 billion to Rs45.80 billion. From this total, Rs44.46 billion will fund 32 public universities, campuses, and study centres. The budget also introduces 11 new campuses and centres for the University of Karachi and the University of Sindh to expand infrastructure across the province.

SINDH BUDGET REFLECTS GOVT'S FRUGAL APPROACH

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Anwar Khan

KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday presented a Rs3.56 trillion budget for fiscal year 2026-27 before the Sindh Assembly, proposing a sweeping tax rationalisation measures, major social spending and new initiatives in renewable energy, agriculture, financial infrastructure, besides a green data and artificial intelligence programme.

Amid protest chants from the opposition with Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah in chair, the chief minister announced a 4 percent increase in total outlay with a deficit of Rs37 billion in the fiscal plan that adds no fresh taxes to the existing taxpayers. The budget also approved a 7 percent increase in the government employees' salaries with a minimum wage fixing at Rs43,000 a month.

According to the budget documents, the Sindh government budget outlay has been increased by 4 percent.

Total receipts of the province are estimated Rs3.525 trillion for the next fiscal year as against estimated Rs3.411 trillion in this fiscal year. While, total expenditures estimated Rs3.562 trillion for FY27 compared to Rs3.442 trillion were projected in FY26. The budget carries a Rs37 billion deficit with Rs3.525 trillion receipts and Rs3.562 trillion expenditures.

On receipts side, current revenue receipts estimates Rs3.038 trillion including, revenue assignment Rs2.083 trillion, straight transfer Rs123 billion, grants to offset losses Rs56 billion, provincial tax receipts (excluding GST on services) Rs234 billion, provincial non tax receipts Rs85 billion and provincial sales tax on services and taxes from agricultural Rs456 billion. In addition, current capital receipts estimated Rs68.344 billion, carryover balance Rs90 billion and other receipts Rs328.53 billion for the next fiscal year.

On expenditure side, Current Revenue Expenditure (CRE) have been estimated at Rs2.560 trillion for FY27, compared to Rs2.142 trillion for the FY26. Current capital expenditures estimated Rs281.673 billion for FY27. Provincial development expenditure is estimated RS 720.3085 billion for the next fiscal year down from Rs1.018 billion.

Murad told the House that sales tax rates on selected services have been rationalised to simplify procedures, allow input tax credit, and end the dual tax rate system. He said Sindh's shift from a positive-list to a negative-list regime for sales tax on services has helped broaden the tax base and reduce classification disputes and litigation.

Under the previous system, only services on a specified list were taxable. The new framework reverses that approach, making all services liable to the standard tax rate unless explicitly exempted under the First Schedule to the Sindh Sales Tax on Services Act, 2011, or subject to reduced or fixed rates under Part II of the Second Schedule.

In a bid to support education-related services including student consultancy, testing, and evaluation, the sales tax rate is proposed to be cut to 5 percent. The existing 5 percent reduced rate on recruiting agents providing overseas employment services for Pakistani workers is proposed to be extended for further two years.

Sales tax relief is also proposed for development projects in Sindh funded by international donor agencies. To encourage documentation and digitalisation in the retail sector, POS integration for beauty parlours and salons is proposed to be made mandatory. These services will continue to be taxed at the reduced rate of 8 percent.

The insurance sector has largely remained non-compliant with Sindh sales tax and has pursued litigation on the issue. To resolve this and expand access to health and life insurance, the government has negotiated a comprehensive resolution framework with industry representatives. Under it, sales tax on insurance agents is proposed to be reduced from 5 percent to 2 percent, and the rate for insurance brokers is proposed to fall to 3 percent. Individual life insurance will also receive further relief through an increase in the tax-exempt coverage limit from Rs0.5 million to Rs3.5 million.

In line with the National Fiscal Pact, penalties for non-filing of agricultural income tax returns are proposed to be reduced and rationalised. The super tax exemption threshold on agricultural income is proposed to rise from Rs150 million to Rs500 million, while the super tax rate is proposed to be cut from 10 percent to 8 percent, aligning it with federal income tax rates. To give legal effect to these measures, the government plans to present a Finance Bill to amend the Sindh Sales Tax Act, 2011.

In the budget 2026-27, the school education will see the largest allocation at Rs446.958 billion for primary to higher secondary institutions. Colleges are allocated Rs41.414 billion and universities and boards Rs9.417 billion. Health services follow with Rs354.271 billion. Law and order receives Rs216.537 billion covering policing, jails, and provincial security. Law and parliamentary affairs are allocated Rs27.565 billion, and local government services Rs201.39 billion for civic infrastructure.

NO DELAY IN PRESENTATION OF KP BUDGET: KUNDI

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By NNI

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said that there is no delay in the presentation of the provincial budget for fiscal year 2026-27.

Talking with media persons in the Parliament House, Governor Faisal Kundi said, "The sister of the PTI founder said that the KP government will not present the budget without holding a meeting with the PTI founder."

He said that in his opinion, PTI founder's sister does not know the constitution, and it is the government's failure if PTI does not present the budget.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that there is talk that the KP government will present the budget on Friday.

He further said that last year, PTI said that they would not present a budget. Taking a jab at former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Governor Kundi said that Gandapur did not convert Dera Ismail Khan into Switzerland.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that there were issues like terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, and other issues in Dera Ismail Khan. He assured that if PTI talks about the development and progress of the province, then they will join hands with them.

He said that KP is facing a wheat shortage issue. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to take notice of this situation and remove the hurdles. He predicted that a Jayala chief minister will be sworn in Gilgit-Baltistan soon.

In another development, the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) fixed the hearing of the contempt of court petition filed by Uzma Khan, the sister of PTI founder.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court will hear the contempt of court petition tomorrow.

TTAP HOSTS 'PEOPLE'S ALTERNATIVE BUDGET DIALOGUE'

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: The Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) Punjab on Wednesday organised the "People's Alternative Budget Dialogue", bringing together political representatives, economists and civil society voices to discuss Pakistan's deepening economic crisis and the need for a genuine alternative based on the needs of ordinary citizens.

The event, co-hosted by Haqooq-e-Khalq Party (HKP), brought together representatives from different political backgrounds around a common concern that Pakistan's current economic direction has failed to address the realities faced by the majority of the population, while inflation, unemployment and declining purchasing power continue to put pressure on citizens.

The gathering was addressed by HKP leaders Ammar Ali Jan, Farooq Tariq and Haider Butt, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shayan Bashir and Mian Akram Usman, former governor of Sindh Muhammad Zubair, and former Senator Mushtaq.

The speakers highlighted that Pakistan's economic crisis cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader political and constitutional crisis. They stressed that sustainable economic recovery requires political stability, rule of law, institutional accountability and a budget framework that prioritises citizens over vested interests.

They also expressed serious concern over the continued incarceration of former prime minister Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, along with political workers and leaders detained across the country. They demanded an end to political victimisation, immediate relief for political prisoners, and the release of those being held in Kot Lakhpat Jail and other detention facilities.

The discussion examined the shortcomings of the current budget approach, including the rising cost of living, pressure on working families, limited economic opportunities, and the widening gap between policy decisions and public realities.

Punjab, as Pakistan's largest province and the centre of its economic activity, remained a key focus of the discussion. The speakers highlighted how communities across the province are experiencing the impact of inflation, unemployment and declining access to essential services.

The TTAP Punjab stated that the 'People's Alternative Budget Dialogue' was part of a broader effort to move beyond criticism and develop a serious, policy-based alternative rooted in economic justice, democratic accountability and constitutional governance.

The organisation reaffirms its commitment to continue engaging with political, economic, and social stakeholders to present solutions that reflect the aspirations and challenges of the people of Pakistan.

PVMA CONCERNED OVER NEW SALES TAX MECHANISM

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: Chairman of the Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers Association (PVMA), Sheikh Umer Rehan, has expressed serious concerns over the new sales tax mechanism introduced in the federal budget for ghee and cooking oil, warning that prices could rise by up to Rs10–15 per kilogram.

He stated that the ghee and cooking oil industry is already operating under a heavy tax burden, but instead of providing relief, the government has further increased financial pressure on the sector through additional taxation measures.

According to him, the budget has expanded the scope of the Third Schedule by shifting sales tax collection on ghee and cooking oil to a mechanism based on the Maximum Retail Price (MRP). He said this change will significantly increase the tax burden on the industry.

Sheikh Umer Rehan warned that as a result, the prices of ghee and cooking oil are likely to increase by Rs10 to Rs15 per kilogram, which would directly impact consumers across the country. He added that PVMA had already urged the government prior to the budget to reduce taxes on the edible oil and ghee sector in order to provide relief to the public.

However, instead of easing the burden, the new fiscal measures have further increased taxation on the industry. He cautioned that higher taxes will raise production costs, making it increasingly difficult to maintain price stability in the market.

The PVMA chairman urged the government to review the proposed sales tax collection system and withdraw the changes related to the Third Schedule to protect both the industry and consumers from additional financial strain.

He emphasized that ghee and cooking oil are essential daily-use commodities, and any additional taxation on them will contribute to inflation and further increase the financial difficulties of the common man.

SINDH PRESENTS RS3.56TN PROVINCIAL BUDGET FOR FY2026-27 AMID OPPOSITION WALKOUT

- No new taxes have been imposed in budget, says CM Murad

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 9 hours ago
By BR Web Desk

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday unveiled an over Rs3.562 trillion provincial budget, while the budget deficit was projected Rs36.9 billion, for the fiscal year 2026-27.

CM Murad commenced the budget speech, for the thirteenth time, amid ruckus from the opposition lawmakers, who later staged a walkout from the provincial assembly.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," he said.

Source: Sindh govt website

"Recent regional developments have once again demonstrated Pakistan's role as a voice of peace, stability and principled diplomacy," said CM Murad.

He said the budget was being presented at a time when the global economy continued to face uncertainty arising from geopolitical tensions, disruption in international trade, volatility in markets and inflationary pressures.

Current Revenue Expenditure

In case of Current Revenue Expenditure (CRE), the provincial government proposed Rs2.56 trillion for FY2026-27, with 20% increase over last year's estimates.

The Budget Estimates (BE) 2026-27 for the development expenditure were proposed to be Rs720.385 billion, recording a decline of 30% over the last year's development portfolio of Rs1,018.326 billion.

"The decrease will be absorbed by all development components." CM Sindh.

"The prevailing regional security situation has necessitated higher national expenditures on defence and strategic preparedness, thereby reducing the fiscal space available for development spending across all tiers of government. At the same time, volatility in global energy markets and recurrent fuel crises have increased the cost of government operations, infrastructure projects, transportation, and service delivery, placing additional strain on public finances."

BE2026-27 in relation to (CRE) some of the important sectors are as under:

- Rs216.537 billion for the Law & Order, Jails and Policing in province;
- Rs27.565 billion for Law and Parliamentary Affairs;
- Rs38.22 billion for Agriculture sector
- Rs11.6 billion for Livestock & Fishries sector;
- Rs41.1 billion for Irrigation sector;
- Rs66.48 billion for Energy sector;
- Rs18.291 billion for Works and Services;
- Rs201.39 billion for Local Government Services;

- Rs8.18 billion for Public Health Engineering activities;
- Rs354.271 billion for Health Services;
- Rs10.856 billion for Information & Publicity
- Rs446.958 billion for School Education Services including Primary, Middle, Secondary, H: Secondary, Rs41.414 billion for Colleges, Rs9.417 billion for Universities & Boards;
- Rs133.54 billion for Subsidies for next FY2026-27, and;
- Rs54.25 billion for Debt Servicing and Interest Repayment

Sectoral allocations for Annual Development Programme (ADP) 2026–27:

Allocations for major sectors and departments are summarised as follows:

- Education sector: Rs25,860.679 million (approximately 6.80% of total ADP size)
- Health sector: Rs17,433.422 million (approximately 4.60% of total ADP size)
- Local government including Mega — Water & Sanitation and Roads: Rs121,663.861 billion (approximately 26.2% of total ADP size)
- Public health engineering & RD: Rs40.86 billion (approximately 10.70% of total ADP size)
- Agriculture (including Livestock): Rs6.30 billion (approximately 1.66% of total ADP size)
- Irrigation: Rs30.94 billion (approximately 8.14% of total ADP size)
- Transport & Communication: Rs39.536 billion (approximately 10.4% of total ADP size)

The Benazir Hari Card Programme, which received Rs8.0 billion in FY 2025-26, continued with an allocation of Rs3 billion in FY 2026-27. The Sindh Peoples Support Programme and Benazir Housing initiatives continue to receive allocations of Rs2.0 billion each.

Sindh Sales Tax on Services

For promoting education support services (including educational consultancy for students, testing & evaluation services), the rate of sales tax was proposed to be reduced to 5%.

The existing relief of reduced rate of 5% sales tax on recruiting agent services for overseas employment of Pakistani workers was proposed to be continued for further two years.

For promoting documentation and digitalisation in the retail sector, the Point of Sale (POS) integration by beauty parlors/salons was proposed to be made mandatory henceforth while such services shall continue to be levied at the reduced tax rate of 8%.

Relief was proposed in relation to the rate of super tax on agricultural income by increasing the exemption threshold from Rs150 million to Rs500 million and also reducing the rate from 10% to 8%.

7% increase in salary and pension

The provincial government has proposed a 7% increase in salaries and pensions of government employees, and a range of relief measures aimed at supporting households, farmers and businesses.

Minimum wage raised

The minimum monthly wage in the province has been raised to Rs43,000.

Rs100bn allocated for Karachi

CM Murad said that the Sindh government is paying "special attention" to the development projects in Karachi.

"Rs 100.19 billion has been allocated for Karachi in the fiscal year 2026-27," said the Sindh CM.

"Development projects worth billions for Karachi's infrastructure, traffic, sanitation, water and education sectors have become part of the budget," he added.

Shahrah-e-Bhutto extension

CM Murad informed the lower house that the Shahrah-e-Bhutto, which is currently facilitating 25,000 vehicles daily, will be extended from Qayyumabad to Karachi Port.

Opposition leader Ali Khursheedi said, "Urban Sindh was not represented in the budget."

Earlier, Murad chaired the provincial cabinet's budget meeting, attended by provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants, the chief secretary, secretaries and senior officials

The cabinet approved the Sindh Budget 2026-27, reaffirming its commitment to inclusive development, poverty reduction, and public welfare.

Insurance sector

Tax rates on insurance agents and brokers were proposed to be reduced further from 5% to 2% and 3%, respectively.

Some relief was also proposed by increasing tax exemption threshold from insurance coverage of Rs0.5 million to coverage of Rs3.5 million in respect of individual life insurance.

Special measures have been introduced under the guidance of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, including support for workers through an increase in the minimum wage.

Sindh CM Murad presents Rs3.45trn provincial budget for FY2025-26

"We will continue serving the people of Sindh and work even harder in the new fiscal year," said CM Murad.

"On Bilawal Bhutto's instructions, we are taking special measures to eliminate poverty," said Murad, saying that the Sindh government has also decided on a minimum wage for labourers in the new budget.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday unveiled a Rs18.77 trillion federal budget for fiscal year 2026-27, extending relief to the salaried class and tax incentives to exporters, real estate, and construction sectors to revive industry, promote investment, and steer the economy towards a 4% growth target.

SENATE PANEL RECOMMENDS BRINGING EXPORTERS UNDER FINAL TAX REGIME

- Exporters face severe challenges under the Normal Tax Regime, with Rs 400 billion in blocked refunds

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 19 hours ago

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By Tahir Amin

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ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue recommended the inclusion of exporters under the Final Tax Regime and further rationalisation of the tax framework to support export-led growth and enhance foreign exchange earnings.

The development comes as the committee met with Saleem Mandviwalla in the chair, which continued deliberations on the Finance Bill 2026-27, reviewing a wide range of fiscal, trade, industrial and taxation matters aimed at strengthening economic growth, supporting exports and addressing public concerns.

Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, Chief Coordinator, All Pakistan Exporters Associations, while briefing the committee, said that the restoration of the FTR and adoption of a competitive export taxation framework can realistically enable the export sector to achieve at least 20% growth, resulting in an additional $6.4 billion in export earnings and increasing total exports to approximately $38.4 billion.

He said that in an increasingly competitive global environment, exporters require policy stability, liquidity support, and a taxation framework that promotes expansion rather than constraining growth.

Bilwani added that the current regime creates several negative consequences, like blockage of working capital, increased dependence on costly bank financing, higher cost of doing business, delays in export expansion and modernisation plans, reduced competitiveness in international markets, increased administrative burden on both taxpayers and the Federal Board of Revenue and accumulation of refund backlogs amounting to around Rs400 billion.

The committee was further informed that exporting sectors are facing serious challenges, primarily due to the shift from the Final Tax Regime (FTR) 1% to the Normal Tax Regime (NTR) (1% Minimum + 1% advance tax= 2%) and the continuation of withholding and advance tax deductions on export realisation.

This has exposed exporters to additional liquidity burden, tax complexities, excessive compliance requirements, notices and audits, administrative harassment and unnecessary litigation.

It was said that the transition from FTR to NTR has substantially increased compliance requirements while simultaneously creating significant working capital pressures for exporters. Although taxes are collected upfront through withholding tax and advance tax deductions on export proceeds, the actual tax liability of many exporters under NTR is considerably lower. Several small export sectors’ supply chains are not fully documented, like the food/agro-based sector.

Consequently, exporters are compelled to finance the government through excess tax collections that remain blocked in refund claims for prolonged periods, discouraging SMEs and newcomer exporters.

The committee was further informed that instead of reviving FTR for exports from NTR, the government has increased the minimum tax from 1% to 1.25%.

By increasing the minimum tax, the additional tax burden has also increased in tax rates for companies/AOP, which is not sustainable for the exporters in the international market where they face cut-throat competition with a narrow profit margin and high compliance costs, said Bilwani.

BALOCHISTAN GOVERNMENT UNVEILS RS1089 BILLION BUDGET FOR FY 2026-27

Budget 2026-27 National

June 18, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Budget focuses on development spending, job creation, health reforms, and new economic initiatives across the province

Balochistan government has unveiled a Rs1,089 billion budget for FY 2026-27, presented by Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani in the provincial assembly.

The spending plan focuses on development expansion, social sector uplift, and fiscal discipline while maintaining balance between ongoing and new initiatives aimed at sustainable growth planning process across the province.

Development and funding priorities outlined

Development budget is set at Rs206 billion, including Rs106 billion for new schemes and Rs100 billion for ongoing projects.

The province will also receive Rs45 billion federal grants and Rs40 billion foreign assistance, strengthening infrastructure, services, and development execution across key sectors in coming year.

Employment generation initiatives announced

Government will create 5,000 new jobs under the budget, aimed at expanding employment opportunities.

Of these, 3,000 posts will be in education, 500 in health, 1,000 in newly formed districts, and 500 across other departments to strengthen administrative capacity and public service delivery in province.

Revenue targets and health allocation

Revenue target is set at Rs170 billion for FY 2026-27, according to budget documents. The health sector receives Rs96 billion, with Rs6 billion for development and Rs90 billion for non-development expenditures, reflecting government focus on improving healthcare services and facilities across public hospitals and rural areas province wide.

Major health reforms and infrastructure upgrades

Major health allocations include enhanced funding for health card, trauma centers, medicines, and hospitals across Balochistan.

The Health Card grant rises to Rs6 billion, while PPHI support increases to Rs8.8 billion. Medicine budget grows by 23 percent to Rs8.5 billion, alongside Rs1.3 billion for Quetta trauma center and upgrades to key hospitals and institutes.

These investments aim to improve access, quality, and emergency healthcare services across the province significantly overall.

New development projects and digital reforms

Government has announced 11 new initiatives aimed at reducing fiscal pressure, promoting investment, and modernizing key sectors.

A public-private insurance system under Bolan Insurance Company will cover state assets and risks. Rs3.8 billion is allocated for solarization of tube wells, Rs10 billion for Bank of Balochistan, and Rs3 billion for aviation company and master planning projects.

New e-pay system will digitize tax collection, while e-commerce centers, mineral investment, cultural preservation, and grievance system reforms strengthen governance framework.

SINDH SETS RS775 BILLION REVENUE TARGET FOR FY 2026-27

Budget 2026-27 National

June 18, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Provincial government aims to boost tax collections and non-tax revenues amid strong growth trends.

The Sindh government has set an ambitious revenue target of more than Rs775 billion for the fiscal year 2026-27, aiming to strengthen provincial finances through higher tax collections and increased non-tax income.

Presenting the budget on Wednesday, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah announced that the provincial government expects to generate Rs690 billion through various provincial taxes, while an additional Rs85 billion is projected from non-tax revenue streams.

According to the budget estimates, Sindh Sales Tax is expected to contribute Rs450 billion during FY 2026-27.

Meanwhile, collections from the Board of Revenue and Excise components are projected at Rs234.06 billion. This amount includes Rs32 billion expected from stamp duties. Additionally, settlement recoveries under the Infrastructure Cess Amendment Act, 2026 are estimated at Rs25 billion.

The chief minister highlighted the province's improving revenue performance, stating that Sindh had already collected Rs532.3 billion in tax revenues during the first 11 months of FY 2025-26.

The government expects total tax receipts to reach Rs625 billion by the end of the current fiscal year, reflecting a 6 percent increase compared to the Rs505.9 billion collected in FY 2024-25.

Non-tax revenues have also shown significant growth. The government projects non-tax income to reach Rs86.5 billion, marking an increase of nearly 50 percent over the previous year's collection of Rs40.3 billion.

The Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) has demonstrated strong performance as well, recording collections of Rs300 billion during the first 11 months of FY 2025-26, representing a 22 percent year-on-year increase.

The provincial government expects SRB revenues to rise further to Rs360 billion by the close of the current fiscal year.

Summing up the fiscal outlook, the chief minister said the FY 2026-27 revenue target of Rs775.06 billion includes Rs450 billion from Sindh Sales Tax on Services and Rs240.06 billion from excise duties, taxation levies, Board of Revenue collections, Agriculture Income Tax, and other sources.

The target reflects the government's efforts to enhance revenue generation and support development spending across the province.

SINDH PROPOSES OVER RS720 BILLION DEVELOPMENT SPENDING IN BUDGET 2026-27

Budget 2026-27 National

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Government prioritizes ongoing projects amid economic pressures and fiscal constraints

The Sindh government has proposed development expenditures exceeding Rs720 billion in its Budget 2026-27, aiming to continue infrastructure development and improve public services despite mounting economic challenges.

Presenting the budget in the Sindh Assembly on Wednesday, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah announced that the provincial government has allocated Rs720.385 billion for development initiatives across multiple sectors of the province.

The allocation reflects the government's commitment to sustaining development activities while adopting a cautious fiscal strategy.

According to the budget estimates, the proposed Provincial Annual Development Plan (ADP) for 2026-27 stands at Rs385 billion.

In addition, Rs15 billion has been earmarked for district-level ADPs, while the Foreign Project Assistance (FPA) component is estimated at Rs256.055 billion.

The budget also includes Rs64.33 billion under the Federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

The chief minister highlighted that the new development portfolio represents a significant decline of nearly 30 percent compared to the previous year's allocation of Rs1,018.326 billion.

He attributed the reduction to emerging geopolitical developments in the Gulf region, growing economic uncertainty, fiscal constraints, and the provincial government's austerity measures.

Murad Ali Shah emphasized that no new development schemes would be introduced under the ADP 2026-27. Instead, the government will focus on completing ongoing projects and maximizing development outcomes through efficient utilization of resources.

He stated that the administration aims to safeguard essential public services while prioritizing flagship projects of strategic importance.

According to the chief minister, rising volatility in global energy markets, recurring fuel crises, and increased operational costs have placed additional pressure on public finances.

The Sindh government, he said, has adopted a prudent fiscal approach centered on high-impact interventions, inclusive growth, and improved service delivery.

Shah reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that every rupee spent contributes to the welfare, prosperity, and sustainable development of the people of Sindh.

FINANCE BILL 2026 INTRODUCES CONCEPT OF AUTHORIZED SHIPPING AGENT

Budget 2026-27 Ports and Shipping

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

New proposal aims to strengthen tax compliance and accountability for non-resident shipping operators through locally authorized representatives.

The federal government has proposed a significant change to Pakistan's shipping and taxation framework through the Finance Bill 2026, presented as part of the Pakistan Budget 2026-27.

The proposed amendment seeks to formally introduce the concept of an "authorized shipping agent" to improve compliance, accountability, and tax administration for foreign shipping entities operating in the country.

According to A.F. Ferguson & Co analysis on budget 2026-27, an authorized shipping agent would refer to any person in Pakistan who is expressly or implicitly authorized by a non-resident shipowner, charterer, or vessel operator to act on their behalf concerning a ship or voyage.

The measure is designed to establish a clear local representative responsible for handling various operational and financial obligations associated with maritime activities.

According to the proposed framework, the authorized shipping agent will be entrusted with responsibilities related to the receipt, collection, management, and accounting of freight charges and related revenues.

The agent may also be responsible for cargo documentation, manifest submissions, freight reporting requirements, and the management or control of freight-related receipts connected to a specific vessel or voyage.

Additionally, the agent will be required to submit relevant tax returns under the applicable legal provisions.

The Finance Bill further proposes that the authorized shipping agent be recognized as the official representative of the non-resident shipping entity within Pakistan.

This designation would carry substantial legal and financial responsibilities, including joint and several liability for tax payments and other obligations linked to the vessel or voyage.

Furthermore, the authorized shipping agent would share responsibility for compliance requirements alongside the ship's master. This includes participation in assessments, legal proceedings, tax recovery actions, and other regulatory matters arising from shipping operations.

Industry observers believe the proposed amendments are intended to create a stronger compliance mechanism by identifying a clearly accountable local representative.

By imposing joint liability and assigning defined responsibilities, the government aims to enhance transparency, improve tax collection, and streamline regulatory oversight of international shipping activities operating through Pakistani ports.

If approved, the new framework could play a key role in strengthening Pakistan's maritime tax administration and ensuring greater compliance by foreign shipping operators conducting business in the country.

PAKISTAN PROPOSES FED EXEMPTION FOR HYDRATION AND ELECTROLYTE DRINKS

Budget 2026-27 Taxation

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Budget 2026-27 aims to exclude low-sugar hydration beverages from the 20% Federal Excise Duty.

The federal government has proposed a significant tax relief measure in the Pakistan Budget 2026-27 by excluding hydration drinks and electrolyte beverages from the imposition of Federal Excise Duty (FED).

The move is aimed at encouraging healthier beverage options while refining the country's taxation framework for sugary products.

Under the proposed budgetary changes, hydration beverages and sports drinks that comply with international health standards, including those aligned with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, would no longer be subject to the existing 20 percent FED charged on retail prices.

Previously, sugary fruit juices, syrups, squashes, and certain water-based beverages were brought under the ambit of a 20 percent Federal Excise Duty. However, mineral water and aerated water had already been exempted from this levy.

The latest proposal seeks to expand these exemptions to include specific hydration products that meet defined nutritional standards.

According to the proposed amendments in the Finance Bill, hydration drinks or electrolyte beverages designed to support body hydration and replenish essential minerals would qualify for the exemption.

However, only products containing no more than 5 grams of sugar per 100 milliliters and free from artificial sweeteners would be eligible.

The government's initiative appears to align with broader public health objectives by promoting beverages with lower sugar content.

Industry experts believe that such measures could encourage manufacturers to reformulate products and introduce healthier alternatives for consumers.

If approved by parliament, the exemption could provide relief to beverage manufacturers and consumers alike while supporting efforts to reduce excessive sugar consumption.

The proposal also reflects the government's strategy to distinguish between high-sugar drinks and healthier hydration products through targeted taxation policies.

The final implementation of the proposed tax changes will depend on parliamentary approval during the budget process for the fiscal year 2026-27.

SINDH RAISES SALARIES AND PENSIONS BY 7% IN FY2026-27 BUDGET

Budget Budget 2026-27 National

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Provincial budget of Rs3.56 trillion focuses on relief, development spending and no new taxes

KARACHI, June 17 — Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday presented a Rs3.562 trillion provincial budget for fiscal year 2026-27, announcing a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for government employees while refraining from imposing any new taxes.

The budget, presented in the Sindh Assembly for the thirteenth time, projects a fiscal deficit of Rs36.9 billion and allocates Rs750 billion for development spending, underscoring the government's continued emphasis on infrastructure expansion, public welfare and economic stability.

Opposition lawmakers protested during the session and later staged a walkout.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," the chief minister said while presenting the financial plan.

The salary and pension increase is aimed at easing pressure on public sector employees amid rising living costs, while the minimum monthly wage has also been raised to Rs43,000 to support low-income workers.

The provincial government said the measures form part of a broader relief-oriented fiscal strategy that balances social protection with development priorities.

Sindh has allocated Rs750 billion for development projects in FY2026-27, with a major focus on infrastructure, urban services and social sectors.

Karachi, the country's financial hub, has been allocated Rs100.19 billion for development projects covering roads, traffic management, sanitation, water supply and education.

Officials said the investment aims to improve urban infrastructure and enhance public services in Pakistan's largest city.

The government also announced plans to extend the Shahrah-e-Bhutto from Qayyumabad to Karachi Port, a project expected to ease traffic congestion and improve connectivity in commercial areas.

The chief minister said the budget was prepared amid global economic uncertainty, including inflationary pressures, geopolitical tensions and trade disruptions.

"Recent regional developments have once again demonstrated Pakistan's role as a voice of peace, stability and principled diplomacy," he said.

The budget will now be debated in the provincial assembly before final approval.

SINDH ALLOCATES RS25,860 MILLION FOR EDUCATION SECTOR IN FY2026-27

Budget Budget 2026-27 National

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Education remains key priority in Rs3.56 trillion provincial budget

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — The Sindh government has allocated Rs25,860.679 million for the education sector under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) 2026-27, accounting for around 6.8% of the total development outlay, according to budget documents presented on Wednesday.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah unveiled a Rs3.562 trillion provincial budget for fiscal year 2026-27, proposing a 7% increase in salaries and pensions while avoiding any new taxes.

The budget projects a fiscal deficit of Rs36.9 billion and sets aside Rs750 billion for development spending, highlighting continued emphasis on infrastructure development, public welfare and economic growth.

Murad Ali Shah presented the budget in the Sindh Assembly for the thirteenth time amid protests by opposition lawmakers, who later staged a walkout.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," he said.

Education Sector Allocation

Under the ADP 2026-27, the education sector has been allocated Rs25,860.679 million, making it one of the key priorities in Sindh's development strategy.

Officials said the funding is aimed at improving school infrastructure, expanding access to education and enhancing the overall quality of learning across the province.

Health and Infrastructure Spending

The health sector has been allocated Rs17,433.422 million, representing around 4.6% of the ADP.

Local government projects, including water supply, sanitation and road infrastructure, have received Rs121,663.861 million, accounting for 26.2% of the development programme.

Public health engineering and rural development have been allocated Rs40,860 million, while transport and communication projects stand at Rs39,536 million.

Agriculture and Irrigation Allocations

Agriculture, including livestock, has been allocated Rs6,300 million, while irrigation projects have received Rs30,940 million under the development programme.

Officials said these allocations aim to strengthen rural economies, improve water management and support the agriculture sector.

Budget Overview

The provincial government said the budget has been prepared amid global economic uncertainty, including inflationary pressures, geopolitical tensions and trade disruptions.

The budget will now be debated in the Sindh Assembly before being put to a vote for final approval.

SINDH BUDGET ALLOCATES RS216.5BN FOR LAW & ORDER, POLICING

Budget Budget 2026-27 National

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Province prioritises security spending in Rs3.56 trillion fiscal plan

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — The Sindh government has allocated Rs216.537 billion for law and order, jails and policing in its budget for fiscal year 2026-27, underscoring a continued focus on public safety and governance.

The announcement came as Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presented a Rs3.562 trillion provincial budget, which includes a 7% increase in salaries and pensions and no new taxes.

The budget projects a fiscal deficit of Rs36.9 billion and allocates Rs750 billion for development spending, highlighting the province’s emphasis on infrastructure, public services and economic growth.

Murad Ali Shah presented the budget for the thirteenth time amid opposition protests, with lawmakers later staging a walkout from the assembly proceedings.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," he said.

Salaries, Pensions and Wage Relief

The provincial government has proposed a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for public sector employees to help offset rising living costs.

The minimum monthly wage has also been raised to Rs43,000 to support low-income workers across Sindh.

Rs750 Billion Development Programme

Sindh has allocated Rs750 billion for development projects in FY2026-27, reaffirming its commitment to infrastructure expansion, poverty reduction and improved public services.

Officials said the budget was prepared amid global economic uncertainty driven by geopolitical tensions, trade disruptions and inflationary pressures.

Key Sector-Wise Allocations

The budget includes significant allocations across multiple sectors:

Rs216.537 billion for law and order, jails and policing

Rs27.565 billion for law and parliamentary affairs

Rs38.22 billion for agriculture

Rs11.6 billion for livestock and fisheries

Rs41.1 billion for irrigation

Rs66.48 billion for energy

Rs18.291 billion for works and services

Rs201.39 billion for local government services

Rs8.18 billion for public health engineering

Rs354.271 billion for health services

Rs10.856 billion for information and publicity

Rs446.958 billion for school education

Rs41.414 billion for colleges

Rs9.417 billion for universities and boards

Rs133.54 billion for subsidies

Rs54.25 billion for debt servicing and interest repayments

Opposition Criticism

Opposition lawmakers criticised the budget during assembly proceedings, arguing that urban areas had not received adequate attention in spending priorities.

The budget will now be debated in the Sindh Assembly before final approval.

KARACHI ALLOCATED RS100 BILLION IN SINDH BUDGET 2026-27

Budget Budget 2026-27 National

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Major funding package targets infrastructure, water, sanitation and education projects

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday announced an allocation of more than Rs100 billion for Karachi's development as part of the provincial budget for fiscal year 2026-27, focusing on infrastructure, transport, sanitation, water supply and education projects.

The allocation comes within a Rs3.562 trillion provincial budget that also includes a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for government employees, with no new taxes imposed.

The budget projects a fiscal deficit of Rs36.9 billion and earmarks Rs750 billion for overall development spending, highlighting the government's focus on infrastructure expansion and public welfare.

Murad Ali Shah presented the budget in the Sindh Assembly for the thirteenth time amid protests by opposition lawmakers, who later staged a walkout.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," he told the assembly.

Karachi Receives Major Development Share

Karachi will receive Rs100.19 billion under the Annual Development Programme, making it one of the largest beneficiaries of provincial development funding.

According to the chief minister, the funds will support a wide range of projects aimed at improving urban infrastructure and public services in the country's largest city.

The allocation includes road construction, traffic management systems, sanitation improvements, water supply schemes and education-related initiatives.

"Development projects worth billions for Karachi's infrastructure, traffic, sanitation, water and education sectors have become part of the budget," Shah said.

Shahrah-e-Bhutto Extension Announced

The government also announced plans to extend Shahrah-e-Bhutto from Qayyumabad to Karachi Port.

Officials said the road currently serves around 25,000 vehicles daily, and the extension is expected to improve connectivity between key commercial areas while easing traffic congestion.

Salary, Pension and Wage Increases

The provincial government proposed a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for public sector employees as part of relief measures for households.

In addition, the minimum monthly wage has been raised to Rs43,000 to support low-income workers across Sindh.

Rs750 Billion Development Outlay

Sindh has allocated Rs750 billion for development projects in FY2026-27, reaffirming its focus on infrastructure development, poverty reduction and improved public services.

The chief minister said the budget was presented amid global economic uncertainty, citing geopolitical tensions, trade disruptions, market volatility and inflationary pressures.

"Recent regional developments have once again demonstrated Pakistan's role as a voice of peace, stability and principled diplomacy," he said.

Opposition Raises Concerns

Opposition Leader Ali Khursheedi criticised the budget, arguing that urban Sindh had not received sufficient representation in spending priorities.

"Urban Sindh was not represented in the budget," he said.

The budget was approved earlier by the provincial cabinet and will now be debated in the Sindh Assembly before being put to a vote for final approval.

SINDH RAISES MINIMUM WAGE TO RS43,000 IN FY2026-27 BUDGET

Budget Budget 2026-27 National

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Provincial budget includes salary and pension hikes with no new taxes

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday announced an increase in the minimum monthly wage to Rs43,000 while presenting the province's Rs3.562 trillion budget for fiscal year 2026-27, providing relief to low-income workers amid rising living costs.

The increase forms part of a broader relief package that also includes a 7% rise in salaries and pensions for government employees. The provincial government did not propose any new taxes in the budget.

The budget projects a fiscal deficit of Rs36.9 billion and allocates Rs750 billion for development spending, highlighting Sindh's focus on infrastructure, public welfare and economic growth.

Presenting the budget in the Sindh Assembly for the thirteenth time, Murad Ali Shah faced protests from opposition lawmakers, who later staged a walkout.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," he told the assembly.

Salaries, Pensions and Minimum Wage Increased

The provincial government has proposed a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for public sector employees as part of measures aimed at easing financial pressure on households.

In addition, the minimum monthly wage has been raised to Rs43,000, providing greater support to workers employed across industrial, commercial and service sectors.

Rs750 Billion Development Programme

Sindh has earmarked Rs750 billion for development projects during FY2026-27, with funding directed towards infrastructure, poverty reduction and improvements in public services.

The chief minister said the budget was being presented against a backdrop of global economic uncertainty, citing geopolitical tensions, disruptions in international trade, market volatility and inflationary pressures.

“Recent regional developments have once again demonstrated Pakistan’s role as a voice of peace, stability and principled diplomacy,” he said.

Karachi Receives Over Rs100 Billion

Karachi will receive Rs100.19 billion under the provincial development programme.

The allocation will support infrastructure projects, traffic management initiatives, sanitation improvements, water supply schemes and education-related development across the city.

“Development projects worth billions for Karachi’s infrastructure, traffic, sanitation, water and education sectors have become part of the budget,” Shah said.

Shahrah-e-Bhutto Extension Announced

The government also announced plans to extend Shahrah-e-Bhutto from Qayyumabad to Karachi Port.

Officials said the road currently handles around 25,000 vehicles daily and that the extension is expected to improve connectivity and ease traffic congestion.

Opposition Voices Concerns

Opposition Leader Ali Khursheedi criticised the budget, arguing that urban Sindh had not received adequate representation in spending priorities.

“Urban Sindh was not represented in the budget,” he said.

The budget was approved earlier by the provincial cabinet during a meeting chaired by the chief minister and attended by ministers, advisers and senior officials. It will now be debated in the Sindh Assembly before being presented for final approval.

SINDH UNVEILS RS3.56 TRILLION BUDGET WITH SALARY HIKE, NO NEW TAXES

Budget Budget 2026-27 National Top stories

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Rs750 billion development programme highlights focus on infrastructure and public welfare

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday unveiled a Rs3.562 trillion budget for fiscal year 2026-27, proposing a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for government employees while refraining from imposing any new taxes.

The budget projects a fiscal deficit of Rs36.9 billion and allocates Rs750 billion for development spending, underscoring the provincial government's focus on infrastructure, public welfare and economic growth.

Murad Ali Shah presented the budget in the Sindh Assembly for the thirteenth time amid protests from opposition lawmakers, who later staged a walkout.

"No new taxes have been imposed in the budget, reflecting the government's commitment to providing relief to the public and the business community," the chief minister told the assembly.

Salaries, Pensions and Minimum Wage Increased

The provincial government proposed a 7% increase in salaries and pensions for public sector employees as part of broader relief measures aimed at supporting households amid rising living costs.

In addition, Sindh increased the minimum monthly wage to Rs43,000, providing additional support to low-income workers across the province.

Rs750 Billion Development Outlay

Sindh has earmarked Rs750 billion for development projects during FY2026-27, with authorities pledging continued investment in infrastructure, poverty reduction and public services.

The chief minister said the budget was being presented against a backdrop of global economic uncertainty, citing geopolitical tensions, trade disruptions, market volatility and inflationary pressures.

"Recent regional developments have once again demonstrated Pakistan's role as a voice of peace, stability and principled diplomacy," he said.

Karachi Receives Over Rs100 Billion

Karachi will receive a major share of the development budget, with Rs100.19 billion allocated for projects in the metropolitan city.

The funding will support infrastructure upgrades, traffic management, sanitation, water supply and education initiatives aimed at improving urban services and living standards.

"Development projects worth billions for Karachi's infrastructure, traffic, sanitation, water and education sectors have become part of the budget," Shah said.

Shahrah-e-Bhutto Extension Announced

The government also announced plans to extend Shahrah-e-Bhutto from Qayyumabad to Karachi Port.

Officials said the roadway currently serves around 25,000 vehicles daily, and the extension is expected to improve connectivity and reduce congestion in key areas of the city.

Opposition Raises Concerns

Opposition Leader Ali Khursheedi criticised the budget, arguing that urban Sindh had not received sufficient representation in provincial spending priorities.

"Urban Sindh was not represented in the budget," he said.

The budget was approved earlier by the provincial cabinet during a meeting chaired by the chief minister and attended by ministers, advisers and senior officials.

FINANCE BILL 2026-27 PROPOSES ABOLISHMENT OF TERM 'LATE FILER' IN PAKISTAN

Budget 2026-27 Taxation

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Government plans to remove higher withholding tax rates for late filers, bringing them at par with active taxpayers.

The federal government has proposed the abolition of the term "Late Filer" through the Finance Bill 2026-27, a move that could simplify Pakistan's tax withholding framework and provide relief to taxpayers who submit their income tax returns after the prescribed deadline.

The proposal was unveiled as part of the Pakistan Budget 2026-27 presented before the National Assembly. If approved by Parliament, taxpayers who file their returns after the due date but remain listed on the Active Taxpayers List (ATL) may no longer face a separate and higher withholding tax regime.

Background of the Term "Late Filer"

According to an analysis by KPMG, the concept of "Late Filers" was introduced through the Finance Act 2024 by inserting Rule 1A into the Tenth Schedule of the Income Tax Ordinance. The amendment created a separate category of taxpayers who appeared on the ATL but had failed to file their returns within the due date or any officially extended deadline.

Under this framework, late filers were subjected to withholding tax rates higher than those applicable to active taxpayers who filed on time. However, these rates remained lower than those imposed on non-filers.

Initially, the higher tax rates for late filers applied only to withholding taxes collected under Sections 236C and 236K, which relate to the purchase, sale, or transfer of immovable property.

The Finance Act 2025 further increased these withholding tax rates, adding to the tax burden on late filers involved in property transactions.

What the New Proposal Means

The Finance Bill 2026-27 proposes the omission of Rule 1A from the Tenth Schedule, effectively eliminating the distinction between active taxpayers and late filers.

As a result, individuals who file their returns after the due date but remain on the ATL would be subject to the same withholding tax rates as taxpayers who submit returns within the prescribed timelines.

Tax experts believe the proposed change could streamline tax administration and reduce complexities associated with multiple taxpayer categories.

However, the government is expected to continue encouraging timely tax return filing through other compliance measures while maintaining stricter treatment for non-filers.

If enacted, the amendment will become part of the broader tax reforms aimed at improving Pakistan's taxation system during fiscal year 2026-27.

IS SUPER TAX ABOLISHED FOR EXPORTERS FOR FY 2026-27?

Budget 2026-27 Taxation

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Budget 2026-27 speech suggests relief for exporters, but the proposal is yet to be incorporated into the Finance Bill and awaits final approval through the Finance Act 2026.

The question of whether Super Tax has been abolished for exporters in FY 2026-27 remains unresolved, despite a proposal announced during the federal budget speech.

While the government indicated its intention to provide relief to exporters by withdrawing the tax, the proposal has not yet been formally incorporated into the Finance Bill 2026.

During the presentation of the Pakistan Budget 2026-27, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb highlighted a number of tax reforms aimed at supporting businesses and enhancing economic growth.

Among these measures was a proposal to abolish Super Tax for exporters, a long-standing demand of the export-oriented sector.

However, tax experts have pointed out that the proposed relief is absent from the Finance Bill tabled before Parliament.

As a result, exporters are still awaiting legal confirmation regarding the withdrawal of the tax. The proposal may ultimately be included when the Finance Act 2026 is finalized after parliamentary deliberations.

According to an analysis by KPMG, the finance minister specifically referred to the possible withdrawal of Super Tax for exporters during his budget speech.

Nevertheless, the proposal does not appear in the current draft of the Bill, creating uncertainty about its implementation for the upcoming fiscal year.

The issue of Super Tax has been under extensive review in recent years due to strong concerns raised by industries and exporters.

Business groups have consistently argued that the tax increases the cost of doing business and reduces the competitiveness of Pakistani exports in international markets.

Although the complete abolition of Super Tax for exporters has not yet materialized, the Finance Bill proposes significant relief through changes in tax rates and income thresholds.

Under the proposed framework, a 10% Super Tax rate will apply to banking companies, entities covered under Part I of the Fifth Schedule of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001, and fertilizer businesses with annual income exceeding Rs150 million.

For all other taxpayers, the Super Tax rate is proposed at 8% on annual income exceeding Rs500 million. These revisions represent a substantial rationalization of the tax structure compared to previous years.

Until the Finance Act 2026 is enacted, exporters will have to wait for final confirmation on whether the proposed abolition of Super Tax becomes a reality in FY 2026-27.

SINDH REDUCES SUPER TAX RATE ON AGRICULTURAL INCOME, EASES PENALTIES FOR NON-FILERS

Budget 2026-27 Taxation

June 18, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Budget 2026-27 raises super tax exemption threshold to Rs500 million and aligns tax rate with federal income tax regime.

KARACHI: The Sindh government has announced significant relief measures for taxpayers in the agricultural sector, including a reduction in the super tax rate on agricultural income and a rationalisation of penalties for non-filing of agricultural income tax returns.

Presenting the Sindh Budget 2026-27 on Wednesday, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said the measures are being introduced in line with commitments made under the National Fiscal Pact and are aimed at encouraging compliance while reducing the tax burden on the agriculture sector.

According to the chief minister, the provincial government has proposed reducing the quantum of penalties imposed on taxpayers who fail to file their agricultural income tax returns. The move is intended to make the tax regime more practical and encourage greater participation in the tax system.

Murad Ali Shah stated that the government has also decided to provide substantial relief regarding the super tax levied on agricultural income. Under the proposed changes, the exemption threshold for super tax will be increased from Rs150 million to Rs500 million.

In addition, the super tax rate on agricultural income will be reduced from 10 per cent to 8 per cent, providing significant tax relief to higher-income agricultural taxpayers.

The chief minister said the revised rate structure has been designed to align Sindh's agricultural income tax framework with the federal income tax regime, ensuring consistency and reducing disparities between provincial and federal taxation policies.

The reduction in the super tax rate and the increase in the exemption threshold are expected to lower the tax burden on agricultural businesses and large-scale farming operations while promoting investment and growth in the agriculture sector.

Officials believe the measures will improve tax compliance, simplify the agricultural taxation framework and support the government's broader efforts to modernise tax administration in accordance with national fiscal reform objectives.

The announcements form part of the Sindh Budget 2026-27, which includes a range of fiscal reforms and tax relief measures aimed at strengthening economic activity and improving the ease of doing business across the province.

With the latest changes, taxpayers earning agricultural income above the revised threshold will benefit from lower super tax rates, while non-filers will face reduced penalties under the proposed rationalised framework.

Markets / Cotton & Textile

KCA DECREASES SPOT RATE BY RS500 TO RS19,500 PER MAUND

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: The Spot Rate Committee of the Karachi Cotton Association on Wednesday decreased the spot rate by Rs 500 per maund, bringing it down to Rs19,500 per maund by the close of trading.

Speaking to BUSINESS RECORDER, cotton analyst Naseem Usman stated that the market remained brisk, with trading volume increasing despite the downward trend observed in the cotton market.

Usman further noted that cotton prices in Sindh currently range between Rs19,000 and Rs19,500 per maund, while Phutti in the province is trading between Rs8,800 and Rs9,300 per 40 kilograms. In Punjab, cotton rates stand between Rs19,500 and Rs20,000 per maund, with Phutti fetching between Rs9,500 and Rs10,000 per 40 kilograms.

In terms of regional trading activity across Sindh, 1,400 bales from Sanghar and 3,200 bales from Tando Adam were sold at prices ranging between Rs19,000 and Rs19,700 per maund, while 1,200 bales from Shahdadpur changed hands between Rs19,000 and Rs19,800 per maund. Additionally, 600 bales each from Hala and Nauabad were traded within the range of Rs19,000 to Rs19,500 per maund.

In Punjab, 600 bales from Khanewal were sold between Rs20,300 and Rs20,500 per maund, while 400 bales from Chichawatni fetched between Rs20,200 and Rs20,500 per maund. Meanwhile, 400 bales from Burewala were traded between Rs19,500 and Rs20,000 per maund, and 100 bales from Hasilpur were sold at Rs20,000 per maund.

COTTON SPOT RATES

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: official KCA spot rates for local dealings in Pakistan rupees on Wednesday, (June 17, 2026).

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The kca official spot rate for local dealings in Pakistan rupees
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                     For base grade 3 staple length 1-1/16"
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Micronaire value between 3.8 to 4.9 NCL

Rate	Ex-gin for	Upcountry price	Spot rate Ex-Karachi	Spot rate ex. Khi. as on 16-06-2026	Difference Ex-karachi
37.324 KG Equivalent	19,500	280	19,780	20,280	-500/-
40 KGS	20,898	300	21,198	21,734	-536/-

Business & Finance / Money & Banking

INDIA'S CENTRAL BANK NOT IN FAVOUR OF OFFSHORE SETTLEMENT FOR SOVEREIGN BONDS, SOURCES SAY

- RBI wants overseas investors to participate directly on the domestic Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching (NDS-OM) platform

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 11 hours ago
By Reuters

MUMBAI: India’s central bank is not looking to enable direct settlement of government securities via offshore settlement platforms like Euroclear – one of the world’s largest securities settlement systems – despite recent tax changes aimed at attracting foreign investors, three sources familiar with the matter said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) wants overseas investors to participate directly on the domestic Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching (NDS-OM) platform, an electronic system for secondary market trading in government bonds, the sources said.

India has gradually opened up its bond markets to foreign investors over the last six years, by creating a pool of securities with no foreign investment limits and more recently by scrapping taxes on capital gains for overseas investors in these securities.

The RBI had previously explored allowing settlement through offshore platforms to expand the foreign investor base for local currency debt, at a time when overseas interest was subdued.

However, the discussions didn’t take off at that time due to the capital gains tax and withholding tax imposed on these securities.

Despite taxes now being scrapped, the central bank still prefers settlement via the local clearing corporation, due to better price discovery and ease of buying and selling.

"Let all liquidity be on NDS-OM and let foreigners participate on NDS-OM. If we allow global clearing platforms, it will fragment liquidity," one of the sources said.

The sources declined to be identified as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

The Reserve Bank of India did not respond to a request for comment. A spokesperson for Euroclear declined to comment.

Last year, financial technology firm MarketAxess launched an electronic trading platform allowing foreign investors to directly trade Indian government securities. The system is linked to the Clearing Corporation of India's NDS-OM platform through a plug-in model, enabling foreign and domestic investors to trade together.

Alongside MarketAxess, Bloomberg is also in the process of linking to the NDS-OM platform, sources said.

A Bloomberg spokesperson declined to comment.

"Euroclear has become a habit for foreign debt investors. NDS-OM is an order driven market. From a liquidity perspective, investing directly is a better option," said Jayesh Mehta, vice chairman & chief executive officer, DSP Finance.

Indian government bonds have in recent years been included in global bond indices such as the J.P. Morgan Emerging Market Bond Index and the Bloomberg Local Currency Emerging Market Bond Index. A Bloomberg index committee is due to review India's entry into a wider global bond index this month.

Since India's decision to remove taxes on foreign investment in government securities on June 5, Indian bonds have drawn $2 billion from overseas investors, compared with $1.6 billion in the first five months of the year.

WARSH-LED FED EXPECTED TO LEAVE INTEREST RATES UNCHANGED

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 13 hours ago

By Reuters

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve is expected to hold interest rates steady on Wednesday at the end of the first meeting chaired by Kevin Warsh, with a new policy statement and economic projections likely to reflect growing concern about the inflation stoked by the Iran war even as oil prices slide on peace deal hopes.

With recent data showing strong U.S. hiring, a relatively low 4.3% unemployment rate, and inflation well above the U.S. central bank's 2% target, many analysts anticipate the Fed will remove language from its policy statement about "additional adjustments" to its benchmark interest rate, a reference that had been used to indicate likely future decreases in borrowing costs.

Strong retail sales data for May, released by the U.S. Commerce Department as Fed officials convened for the second day of their two-day meeting, confirmed that the economy's consumer base had not weakened. Sales were up nearly a full percentage point last month, roughly double what economists expected. Even excluding spending on gasoline that was elevated by high prices, retail sales rose 0.7% versus a 0.2% increase in April.

Warsh has said he dislikes forward guidance about monetary policy in general, and the continued run of strong data has prompted many Fed officials to say it is time to remove the "easing bias" anyway in favor of more neutral language that allows for the possibility that rate hikes might be needed.

Investors currently anticipate the central bank's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee to deliver a quarter-percentage-point rate increase in December.

"We expect a more neutral bias," Michael Feroli, chief U.S. economist at JP Morgan, wrote ahead of the Fed's meeting. "It's possible the committee, under Warsh, takes a cleaver" to the statement and wipes out rate guidance altogether, whether at this meeting or in the future.

In either case, Feroli said, changes to the statement may win over the three policymakers who dissented in favor of more hawkish language at the April 28-29 meeting, providing Warsh, who has regarded dissent as a sign of institutional health and wants Fed meetings to resemble a "family fight," a unanimous vote in his first outing.

The Fed's rate decision, policy statement and updated policymaker projections will be released at 2 p.m. EDT (1800 GMT). Warsh, who replaced former Fed chief Jerome Powell last month, will hold a press conference half an hour later, keeping for now to the schedule adopted by his predecessor.

Powell will continue to be a voting member of the policy committee in his ongoing role as a Fed governor.

In his U.S. Senate confirmation hearing, Warsh said he feels Fed officials talk too much and add too little to the policy discussion, a possible precursor to scaling back his own pace of public appearances and access.

Warsh, 56, who was confirmed last month to a four-year term as Fed chief and a 14-year term on the Board of Governors, took over the top job amid strained relations between Powell and the White House over the former Fed chief's refusal to deliver the big rate cuts demanded by President Donald Trump.

The animosity was marked by Trump's efforts to get more control over the central bank through an attempt to fire Fed Governor Lisa Cook, the first such move by a president, and the launching of a since-dropped criminal investigation of Powell.

The U.S. Supreme Court is due to decide this month on whether Cook can keep her job. While the ruling is expected to go in her favor, it could still have important implications for Fed governance in the future.

Powell, who attended Cook's Supreme Court hearing, has been lauded broadly for resisting Trump's pressure on the central bank. Warsh has not spoken directly on the Cook case or the pressure campaign against his predecessor.

Economic uncertainty clouds fed outlook

Though Warsh starts on a new footing with Trump, the path to rate cuts may be narrowing.

The updated quarterly projections being released this week are expected to show Fed officials at the median no longer see the policy rate falling this year, but instead remaining steady in the current 3.50%-3.75% range amid higher anticipated inflation and possibly a lower year-end unemployment rate. Some officials are likely to pencil in a rate increase.

Warsh's debut press conference may well be dominated by broad questions about his plans, which in the run-up to his nomination by Trump for the top Fed job included frequent criticism of the Powell-led central bank's overall approach to policymaking and communications, calls to lower its holdings of financial assets, and promises of extensive reform.

But there are fast-moving short-term issues as well, notably the apparent end of the U.S.-backed war with Iran and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. While that development has sent world oil prices plunging towards levels seen prior to the start of the conflict in late February, Fed officials will now have to assess how much inflationary pressure may be left to come due to the recent jump in energy costs and what is anticipated to be a lengthy restart to global commodity shipments through the strategic waterway.

With the global oil price around $80 a barrel and some faith that a ceasefire in the Middle East might endure, "so far the impact on inflation looks more like the usual pass-through from large oil shocks," and won't require Warsh to raise rates, David Mericle, chief U.S. economist at Goldman Sachs, wrote in an analysis of this week's meeting.

But rate cuts are likely to be on hold until at least the middle of next year, if they happen at all, given that headline inflation is expected to rise above 4% in the coming months and remain higher than 3% through 2026.

"A long pause would increase the probability that the FOMC could instead decide that the (federal) funds rate is already in an appropriate place if the economy continues to perform well," Mericle said. "We see a flat path as a plausible alternative."

PAKISTAN POSTS $459MN C/A SURPLUS IN MAY 2026

- Surplus follows a deficit of $276 million recorded in April 2026

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 10 hours ago
By BR Web Desk

Pakistan's current account posted a massive surplus of $459 million in May 2026, data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed on Wednesday.

The surplus follows a deficit of $276 million recorded in April 2026 and a deficit of $44 million in May 2025.

The surplus came from significantly higher remittance inflows and a marginal increase in exports during the month.

"The primary driver of the current account surplus was record-high remittance inflows of $4.25 billion, which more than offset the goods trade deficit," Waqas Ghani, Head of Research at JS Global, told BUSINESS RECORDER.

In May 2026, the country's total exports of goods and services amounted to $3.21 billion, up over 1% from $3.17 billion in the same month of the previous year.

Meanwhile, total imports clocked in at $6.49 billion in May 2026, up nearly 2% year-on-year from $6.39 billion in the same month last year, according to SBP data.

During May 2026, Pakistan's workers' remittance inflows clocked in at $4.25 billion, as compared to $3.69 billion in the same month last year, reflecting an increase of 15.4% on a yearly basis.

During the 11MFY26, the current account recorded a cumulative surplus of $255 million, down 84%, as compared to a surplus of $1.62 billion recorded in the same period last fiscal.

The surplus underscores the continued strengthening of Pakistan's external position, said Advisor to the Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad.

"Four surpluses in five months! A stronger external account is the foundation of sustainable high economic growth," he added.

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves (excluding CRR/SCRR) rose to $17.27 billion, reflecting a substantial 49% rise year-on-year, as compared to $11.62 billion, indicating stronger external buffers despite ongoing structural pressures on the current account.

Pakistan's REER Index

Pakistan's Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) has increased to 106.15 in May 2026 compared to 105.84 in April 2026.

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 0.03% MoM in May 2026 to a provisional value of 37.9 from 37.89 in April 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.

SINDH SETTLES INSURANCE SECTOR DISPUTES, ANNOUNCES LOWER TAX RATES IN BUDGET 2026-27

Budget 2026-27 Money & Banking

June 18, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Tax rates for insurance agents and brokers reduced, while life insurance exemption threshold increased to Rs3.5 million.

KARACHI: The Sindh government on Wednesday announced the resolution of long-standing legal disputes with the insurance sector and unveiled significant tax relief measures aimed at promoting insurance services and improving compliance from the industry.

Presenting the Sindh Budget 2026-27, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the insurance sector, particularly life insurance, health insurance, reinsurance companies and insurance brokers, had remained non-compliant with the levy of Sindh Sales Tax for several years.

He noted that insurance companies had challenged the tax levy through litigation in various courts, creating uncertainty for both the government and industry stakeholders.

To resolve the issue, the provincial government held extensive negotiations with representatives of the insurance industry and successfully developed a framework for settlement. According to the chief minister, the agreement is designed to benefit consumers, improve tax compliance and bring an end to the prolonged legal disputes.

Murad Ali Shah said the framework envisages compliance by insurance companies, withdrawal of pending litigation and settlement of past tax liabilities. He added that the agreement would help create a more stable and predictable environment for the insurance sector while encouraging wider access to insurance products.

The Sindh government has also proposed further reductions in tax rates for insurance agents and brokers. Under the budget proposals, the tax rate for insurance agents will be reduced from 5 per cent to 2 per cent, while the rate for insurance brokers will be lowered from 5 per cent to 3 per cent.

The chief minister said the reduction in tax rates would encourage insurance business activities and provide greater earning opportunities for agents and brokers operating across the province.

In another major relief measure, the government has proposed a substantial increase in the tax exemption threshold for individual life insurance policies. The exemption limit has been raised from insurance coverage of Rs500,000 to Rs3.5 million.

Officials believe the enhanced exemption threshold will encourage more individuals to purchase life insurance coverage, improve financial protection for families and support the overall growth of the insurance industry.

The latest measures form part of the Sindh government's broader strategy to expand insurance penetration, promote financial inclusion and create a business-friendly environment for the sector.

Industry stakeholders are expected to welcome the settlement of tax-related disputes and the reduction in tax rates, which could help strengthen confidence in the insurance market and facilitate future growth.

BANKS SET TO POCKET RS7 TRILLION AS GOVERNMENT DEBT BILL EXPLODES DESPITE FALLING INTEREST RATES

Budget 2026-27 Money & Banking Top stories

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Domestic debt servicing jumps to nearly Rs7 trillion as years of heavy government borrowing deliver another record payday for banks

KARACHI: Pakistan's banking sector is poised for another windfall as the federal government is expected to pay an unprecedented Rs6.98 trillion in interest on domestic debt during the fiscal year 2026-27, exposing the massive cost of years of aggressive government borrowing.

Budget documents reveal that the government has earmarked nearly Rs7 trillion in mark-up payments to domestic financial institutions next year, representing a staggering increase of almost Rs1 trillion from the Rs6 trillion allocated in the outgoing fiscal year.

The massive interest burden highlights the growing strain of Pakistan's debt-driven fiscal model, where the government continues to rely heavily on commercial banks to finance budget deficits, diverting enormous public resources toward debt servicing instead of development spending.

Economic experts warn that the soaring debt-servicing bill comes despite a significant reduction in borrowing costs over the past two years. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) had slashed its benchmark policy rate from a historic high of 22 percent to 10.50 percent, although it was recently increased to 11.50 percent.

Analysts argue that the rise in interest payments despite lower policy rates reflects the sheer size of the government's domestic debt stock, which has expanded rapidly in recent years due to persistent fiscal deficits and mounting financing needs.

"The debt burden has reached a level where even lower interest rates are unable to significantly reduce the government's financing costs," said a financial market expert. "The volume of debt is simply too large."

The upcoming fiscal year's debt-servicing projections indicate that the banking sector will remain one of the biggest beneficiaries of government borrowing. Higher interest receipts are expected to further strengthen the profitability and balance sheets of banks and other financial institutions.

Overall, the government's total mark-up payments—including both domestic and foreign debt—are projected to surge to Rs8.05 trillion in fiscal year 2026-27, compared with Rs6.94 trillion in the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, interest payments on foreign debt are estimated to reach Rs1.07 trillion, up from Rs931 billion this year, adding further pressure on Pakistan's already stretched fiscal position.

The ballooning debt-servicing cost means that a substantial portion of federal revenues will continue to be consumed by interest payments, leaving limited fiscal space for infrastructure development, social welfare programs, education, and healthcare.

With debt repayments consuming record levels of government resources, economists are increasingly questioning the sustainability of Pakistan's borrowing strategy and warning that meaningful fiscal reforms will be essential to prevent the debt burden from spiraling further out of control.

Markets / Stocks

NIKKEI CLOSE AT RECORD HIGH ON AI

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

TOKYO: Japan's Nikkei share average closed at a record high for a third straight session on Wednesday, ending just shy of the 70,000 mark, on easing concerns over the Middle East conflict and sustained buying in AI-related shares ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision.

The Nikkei rose 0.7% to close at 69,902.25 after touching an intraday high of 70,125.75. The broader Topix climbed 0.6% to 4,013.23.

Details of a US-Iran interim deal to end the conflict are emerging, with President Donald Trump saying it would rule out a nuclear weapon for Tehran and a US official saying it would allow Iran to sell oil once signed.

Oil prices eased, extending the previous session's declines as investors assessed the US-Iran peace deal.

Market breadth remained strong, with 137 stocks advancing against 85 decliners in the Nikkei.

INDIAN STOCKS LOG LONGEST WINNING RUN IN 2 MONTHS

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

MUMBAI: India's stock benchmarks rose for a fourth consecutive session on Wednesday, their longest winning streak in two months, aided by falling crude oil prices after the US-Iran peace deal.

The Nifty 50 rose 0.4 percent to 24,085.70, while the BSE Sensex added 0.45 percent to 77,155.62. The indexes have gained about 4 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively, in four sessions.

Ten of the 16 major sectors advanced, while the broader small-caps and mid-caps climbed 0.8 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively.

Broader Asian markets rose 0.3 percent.

Brent crude futures hovered around USD79 a barrel, after dropping 5.1 percent in the previous session to close near three-month lows.

A senior US official said Washington would waive sanctions on Iranian oil under the deal to end the Middle East war, raising the prospect of millions of additional barrels of supply.

CHINA STOCKS CLOSE HIGHER ON CHIP RALLY

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

SHANGHAI: China stocks ended higher on Wednesday, as gains in AI supply-chain shares outweighed losses in consumer and financial shares, pointing to a deepening divergence between the new and old economies. Hong Kong shares fell.

China's blue-chip CSI300 Index closed up 1 percent, while the Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.4 percent. Hong Kong benchmark Hang Seng was down 0.7 percent.

Semiconductor shares jumped 6 percent to an all-time high, leading gains onshore, while the 5G Communication Index climbed 2.5 percent.

In contrast, traditional sectors such as consumer staples and financials fell 1 percent and 0.6 percent, respectively. The coal index dropped 2.1 percent.

China's May activity data points to a deepening "K-shaped" (where different parts of the economy move at different speeds or directions) divergence in the economy, with industrial output edging up but still near multi-year lows and domestic demand cooling notably in the second quarter, analysts at Huatai Securities said in a note.

But the K-shaped divergence could still widen further - not only between the new and old economy and between domestic and external demand, but potentially also between goods and services within domestic demand, between tier-one and nationwide property markets, and across regions - making the economy's structural significance greater than its headline trajectory, they said.

Investors are also digesting remarks from top regulators at an annual forum in Shanghai. ** China's top banking regulator vowed on Wednesday to prevent systemic financial risk and channel resources to emerging industries, as the country undergoes a painful economic restructuring.

The country's central bank said that it would improve the mechanism for regulating short-term interest rates and promote the offshore yuan business in Shanghai.

Tech majors listed in Hong Kong were up 0.2 percent.

EUROPEAN SHARES END HIGHER AS MARKETS AWAIT IRAN DEAL DETAILS

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

FRANKFURT: European shares inched higher on Wednesday as investors awaited details of the US-Iran peace agreement and the Federal Reserve's policy outlook, while auto stocks fell after BMW cut its annual forecast.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index closed 0.5 percent higher, in its fifth session of gains.

However, auto stocks declined the most, down 3.3 percent, their biggest one-day fall in nearly a month. BMW lost 8.3 percent after the premium carmaker lowered its annual profit outlook due to weakness in the Chinese market and the impact of the US-Iran war.

“For the (auto) sector we continue to be underweight. The earnings story continues to be very challenged for the auto sector. The reason is broader and structural,” said Beata Manthey, an equity strategist at Citigroup.

Separately, a survey showed that German automotive suppliers expecting business conditions to worsen over the next year now outnumber the industry’s optimists.

Heavyweight banks supported the STOXX 600, advancing 1.9 percent. They also logged their fifth session of gains, their longest streak since early January.

Tech stocks climbed 1.5 percent with Aixtron up 6.7 percent and BE Semiconductor and ASML adding about 4 percent each. Defence stocks were up 0.5 percent.

Global investors remained cautious ahead of the signing of a peace deal between the US and Iran on Friday after President Donald Trump said the new agreement was not final and he could resume the war if he is unsatisfied.

The sharp drop in oil prices since the announcement of the deal lifted the benchmark STOXX 600 to record highs, but it still lags the US benchmark S&P 500.

Barclays was the latest brokerage to announce that it has closed its underweight position on European stocks and raised its target for the STOXX 600 to 670 points from 620.

WALL ST WAVERS AHEAD OF FIRST FED POLICY DECISION UNDER WARSH

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

NEW YORK: US stock indexes wavered in choppy trading on Wednesday, as investors awaited the first interest rate decision under new Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh.

The indexes have stalled after a sharp rally on Monday when President Donald Trump announced a preliminary US-Iran peace deal that sent oil prices tumbling and eased inflation fears.

Shares of highly valued chipmakers rebounded from Tuesday’s drop. Broadcom rose 5.7 percent and Micron Technology gained 3.7 percent.

Elon Musk's SpaceX fell 3 percent and was set to end lower for the first time since last week's blockbuster market debut, which pushed the company's market valuation above USD2 trillion.

Other heavyweights, including Amazon and Alphabet , also lost steam.

Banks were a bright spot. Shares of Bank of America, Citigroup and Goldman Sachs touched record highs in late morning trading.

Traders are keenly waiting for the Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision, which is set to be announced at 2:00 p.m. ET.

Policymakers are widely expected to hold interest rates unchanged at the 3.50 percent-3.75 percent range as they wrestle with inflation pressures from higher oil prices fueled by the Middle East war.

Investors will also keep a close watch on the new Fed chair's first press conference for his views on inflation, unemployment and the economic outlook.

"I'm of the camp that the Fed should really continue to take a wait-and-see approach. Based on the data today, I would expect that the Fed will not move this year at all," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Cresset Capital Management.

Data showed US retail sales increased more than expected in May, with households purchasing more cars and other vehicles even as they paid higher prices for gasoline.

Traders see the Fed holding rates through much of the year, but are betting on a nearly 43 percent chance of a 25-basis-point rate hike in December, according to CME Group's FedWatch tool.

At 11:54 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 229.58 points, or 0.44 percent, to 52,229.25, the S&P 500 gained 3.97 points, or 0.05 percent, to 7,515.32 and the Nasdaq Composite lost 7.15 points, or 0.03 percent, to 26,369.20.

US stocks have partially recovered from an early June slump, with the blue-chip Dow touching record highs for the past two sessions, as a resilient US economy, broadening of the rally beyond tech shares and falling oil prices aided sentiment.

SINGAPORE STOCKS HIT RECORD HIGH

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

BENGALURU: Singapore stocks notched a record high and South Korea clawed back early declines to close higher on Wednesday, as markets assessed scant details of the

US-Iran peace deal and awaited Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh's first policy decision.

Equities in Seoul reversed course to close up 1.6 percent, helping MSCI's gauge of emerging Asia shares scale a two-week high.

Singapore stocks advanced as much as 1.6 percent to a record high, supported by heavyweight banks and other blue chips.

Indonesia's Jakarta Composite Index reversed early gains to trade 0.6 percent lower, although it has gained around 16 percent since last week's off-cycle rate hike, largely driven by an over 17 percent surge in financials.

The rupiah has also gained more than 2 percent since the surprise rate move, last trading at 17,745 per dollar.

A majority of economists in a Reuters poll expect Bank Indonesia (BI) to raise rates by 25 basis points again on Thursday, although some analysts warn that additional tightening may fall short of relieving pressure on the rupiah.

Markets are also awaiting MSCI's global market accessibility review, due early on Thursday in Jakarta, which will decide whether Indonesia keeps its "emerging market" classification.

Angus Mackintosh, ASEAN specialist at Aletheia Capital, said BI was highly likely to raise rates again to support the rupiah, and expected MSCI to keep Indonesia's emerging-market status in its review later this week.

Globally, attention will turn to Fed Chair Warsh's efforts to navigate a dovish White House while markets continue to price in a rate hike later this year. The Fed's policy meeting is due to wrap up later in the day.

MOST GULF MARKETS GAIN

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about an hour ago

By Reuters

DUBAI: Most Gulf stock markets closed higher on Wednesday as investors weighed an interim US-Iran peace deal.

Some details of the accord emerged on Tuesday, with President Donald Trump saying the arrangement would prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. A US official indicated that Iran would be permitted to resume oil sales once the deal is signed on Friday.

Saudi Arabia's benchmark index edged 0.3 percent lower, weighed down by a 0.4 percent drop in Al Rajhi Bank and a 0.6 percent decrease in oil major Saudi Aramco.

Separately, the kingdom's new airline, Riyadh Air, won the right to operate flights to and from the United States, the US Transportation Department said in an order Tuesday.

WALL STREET TICKS UP AHEAD OF FIRST FED POLICY DECISION UNDER WARSH

- Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 77.71 points while S&P 500 gained 8.14 points

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 11 hours ago
By Reuters

Wall Street's major indexes inched higher in choppy trading on Wednesday, as chip stocks rebounded ahead of the first interest rate decision under new Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh.

Shares of richly valued chipmakers, including Broadcom, Micron Technology, Advanced Micro Devices and Intel, rose between 2.5% and 4%.

The S&P 500 tech index gained 1.2%, while the Philadelphia SE Semiconductor index advanced 3.5%.

U.S. stocks have been choppy after a sharp rally on Monday when President Donald Trump announced a preliminary U.S.-Iran peace deal, which sent oil prices tumbling and eased inflation fears.

Seven of 11 major S&P 500 sectors were lower, with communication services shares leading losses after Meta and Alphabet shed 2.2% and 1.6%, respectively.

Software shares came under renewed pressure, with Adobe, Salesforce and Atlassian down between 1.2% and 2.3%.

Investors' focus is now on the Fed's monetary policy decision, set to be released at 2:00 p.m. ET.

Policymakers are widely expected to hold interest rates unchanged at the 3.50%-3.75% range as they wrestle with inflation pressures from higher oil prices fueled by the Middle East war.

Investors will also keep a close watch on the new Fed chair's first press conference for his views on inflation, unemployment and the economic outlook.

The 10-year Treasury yield, the benchmark for global borrowing costs, edged higher to 4.43%.

"The last thing that Warsh wants to do is send the 10-year yield sharply higher. It's really important for markets for the 10-year yield to stay below 4.5, especially now that oil prices are lower," said Jeff Buchbinder, chief equity strategist at LPL Financial.

"So don't expect any fast moves along those lines. And of course, he has to get the buy-in from the committee. So that will be a very long, drawn-out process."

Data showed U.S. retail sales increased more than expected in May, but a slowdown is likely as the cushion that consumers had from larger tax refunds depletes due to rising costs.

Retail sales jumped 0.9% last month after a downwardly revised 0.4% gain in April, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau said. Economists' expected a rise of 0.5%.

Traders see the Fed holding rates through much of the year, but are betting on a nearly 43% chance of a 25-basis-point rate hike in December, according to CME Group's FedWatch tool.

At 09:41 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 77.71 points, or 0.15%, to 52,070.81, the S&P 500 gained 8.14 points, or 0.11%, to 7,519.49 and the Nasdaq Composite gained 89.53 points, or 0.35%, to 26,466.52.

U.S. stocks have partially recovered from an early June slump, with the blue-chip Dow touching record highs for the past two sessions, as a resilient U.S. economy, broadening of the rally beyond tech shares and falling oil prices aided sentiment.

Oil prices hovered near a three-month low, fueled by hopes that the interim peace deal between the United States and Iran would allow oil to leave the Gulf through the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Still, some uncertainty lingered after Trump said the Iran memorandum of understanding was not final, and he could resume bombing if he did not like it.

Shares of Elon Musk's SpaceX rose 1.6% after surpassing Amazon's market value on Tuesday to become the fifth most valuable company.

CME Group slipped 5% after the exchange operator said its CEO, Terry Duffy, will step down on March 1, and transition to the role of executive chairman.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 1.18-to-1 ratio on the NYSE, and by a 1.52-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

The S&P 500 posted 15 new 52-week highs and 4 new lows, while the Nasdaq Composite recorded 28 new highs and 38 new lows.

INDIA'S STOCK BENCHMARKS LOG LONGEST WINNING RUN IN 2 MONTHS AS OIL PRICES EASE

- The Nifty 50 rose 0.4% to 24,085.70, while BSE Sensex added 0.45% to 77,155.62

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 15 hours ago
By Reuters

India's stock benchmarks rose for a fourth consecutive session on Wednesday, their longest winning streak in two months, aided by falling crude oil prices after the U.S.-Iran peace deal.

The Nifty 50 rose 0.4% to 24,085.70, while the BSE Sensex added 0.45% to 77,155.62. The indexes have gained about 4% and 4.5%, respectively, in four sessions.

Ten of the 16 major sectors advanced, while the broader small-caps and mid-caps climbed 0.8% and 0.5%, respectively.

Broader Asian markets rose 0.3%.

Brent crude futures hovered around $79 a barrel, after dropping 5.1% in the previous session to close near three-month lows.

A senior U.S. official said Washington would waive sanctions on Iranian oil under the deal to end the Middle East war, raising the prospect of millions of additional barrels of supply.

"Lower crude prices are positive for Indian equities, for earnings in sectors that benefit from lower energy costs, while also supporting the macroeconomic fundamentals in the world's third largest oil importer," said Vikas Satija, managing director and chief executive officer at Shriram Wealth.

IT stocks, which are typically sensitive to U.S. interest rates, rose 0.9% ahead of the Federal Reserve's policy decision, with investors awaiting cues on the central bank's rate outlook.

The U.S. Fed is widely expected to hold rates steady at its first meeting under new Chair Kevin Warsh and could drop its easing bias from the policy statement.

Among stocks, Dixon Tech rose 4.9% after J.P. Morgan reiterated its "overweight" rating.

Defence companies surged 3.9% after the country logged record defence production and exports in the financial year 2026.

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles fell 8.3% despite British luxury carmaker Jaguar Land Rover projecting double-digit medium-term revenue growth.

Two analysts attributed the drop to persistent worries over near-term margin or cash-flows and concerns over China growth.

SOUTH KOREAN SHARES TRACK LOSSES IN US TECH; SK HYNIX HITS RECORD HIGH

- The won was quoted at 1,512.9 per dollar on the onshore settlement platform, 0.30% lower than its previous close at 1,508.3

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 18 hours ago
By Reuters

Round-up of South Korean financial markets:

South Korean shares fell on Wednesday, tracking overnight losses in US technology stocks, while heavyweight chipmaker SK Hynix rose to a record high. The benchmark KOSPI was down 30.16 points, or 0.35%, at 8,696.44, as of 0151 GMT, after falling more than 1% earlier in the session.

The Nasdaq Composite and the S&P 500 finished lower on Tuesday under pressure from technology stocks, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average marked its second straight record close and SpaceX rallied to become the fifth-most valuable US company.

Details began to emerge on Tuesday of the US and Iran's interim agreement to end the war in the Middle East, with US President Donald Trump saying it will rule out a nuclear weapon for Tehran and a US official saying it allows Iran to sell oil upon signing.

Among index heavyweights, chipmaker Samsung Electronics fell 2.48%, while peer SK Hynix rose more than 1% to an all-time high. Battery maker LG Energy Solution climbed 1.95%.

Hyundai Motor and sister automaker Kia Corp were down 3.13% and down 1.35%, respectively. Steelmaker POSCO Holdings added 0.38%, while drugmaker Samsung BioLogics rose 0.60%. Of the total 916 traded issues, 417 shares advanced, while 467 declined. Foreigners were net sellers of shares worth 1 trillion won ($660.78 million).

The won was quoted at 1,512.9 per dollar on the onshore settlement platform, 0.30% lower than its previous close at 1,508.3.

In money and debt markets, September futures on three-year treasury bonds gained 0.04 point to 103.19.

The most liquid three-year Korean treasury bond yield fell by 1.3 basis points to 3.707%, while the benchmark 10-year yield fell by 2.4 basis points to 4.084%. -Reuters

JAPAN'S NIKKEI RISES AS INVESTORS WEIGH IRAN CONFLICT OUTLOOK, FED DECISION

- The Nikkei recouped early losses to climb 0.6% to 69,823.80

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 18 hours ago
By Reuters

TOKYO: Japan's Nikkei share average rose on Wednesday as investors weighed prospects for an end to the Middle East conflict and awaited the US Federal Reserve's policy decision.

The Nikkei recouped early losses to climb 0.6% to 69,823.80, while the broader Topix rose 0.8% to 4,024.25.

"With tonight's Fed meeting approaching, it seems investors are adopting a somewhat more wait-and-see stance," said Wataru Akiyama, an equities strategist at Nomura Securities.

"However, the fact that crude oil prices have fallen as the situation in the Middle East has stabilised, this serves as a positive factor for share prices."

Details of a US-Iran interim deal to end the Middle East conflict are emerging, with US President Donald Trump saying it would rule out a nuclear weapon for Tehran and a US official saying it would allow Iran to sell oil once signed.

Oil prices slid about 5% in the previous session to three-month lows, before recovering some ground on Wednesday.

Market breadth remained strong, with 155 stocks advancing against 68 decliners in the Nikkei.

AI-related shares that have underpinned the Nikkei's gains performed strongly overall, with chip inspection equipment maker Lasertec jumping 13.7% and electronic components maker Murata Manufacturing rising 4.6%.

The biggest percentage losers were tech investor SoftBank Group Corp, down 3%, followed by shipping firm Nippon Yusen, which fell 2.5%.

The Nikkei briefly crossed the 70,000 mark for the first time on Tuesday after the Bank of Japan raised interest rates to 1.00%, as widely expected.

Investors will closely watch new Fed Chairman Kevin Warsh's comments on inflation, unemployment and the economic outlook at his first post-Federal Open Market Committee press conference later in the day.

The Fed is widely expected to keep interest rates steady.

A raft of economic indicators released earlier in the day were solid.

Japan's exports rose in May for a ninth consecutive month while core machinery orders for April jumped 8.7% month-on-month, well above economists' median prediction of 0.9%.

KSE-100 INDEX ENDS HIGHER DESPITE VOLATILE INTRADAY TRADING SESSION

Stock & Commodity

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

PSX closes marginally positive as profit-taking offsets early gains

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) ended Wednesday's session on a marginally positive note, rising 118 points to close at 180,511 points.

The index gained 0.07% from the previous close, although trading remained volatile throughout the session as investors booked profits after strong gains in the previous two sessions.

During intraday trading, the benchmark index touched a high of 181,358 points and a low of 179,564 points, reflecting cautious investor sentiment amid mixed market signals.

Strong Trading Activity Continues

Market activity remained robust, with total traded volume exceeding 1.23 billion shares, while traded value stood at approximately Rs69.2 billion, indicating sustained participation from investors.

Analysts said the high volumes reflect continued interest in equities despite short-term volatility driven by profit-taking.

Index Supported by Select Heavyweights

On the index contribution side, key stocks including FATIMA, PPL, OGDC, MTL and SHFA led the upside momentum, collectively contributing 611 points to the benchmark's gains.

Buying interest in large-cap stocks helped offset pressure from selective selling across other sectors.

Geopolitical and Oil Outlook Supports Sentiment

Market sentiment was broadly supported by easing concerns over global oil prices and improving geopolitical outlook, particularly expectations of progress on a potential US–Iran agreement and discussions around the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

However, profit-taking in select heavyweight sectors limited overall gains.

Market Outlook Remains Cautious

Despite intraday volatility, analysts said the market continues to show resilience, with investor interest remaining strong in blue-chip stocks amid shifting global economic cues.

They added that future market direction is likely to depend on developments in global geopolitics, commodity prices and domestic economic policy signals.

GOLD PRICES IN PAKISTAN EASE TO RS455,236 PER TOLA

Stock & Commodity

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Local bullion market slips slightly as global gold prices remain range-bound

KARACHI, June 17, 2026 — Gold prices in Pakistan eased slightly on Wednesday, falling by Rs200 per tola as domestic and international bullion markets showed subdued movement.

According to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), the price of 24-karat gold stood at Rs455,236 per tola on June 17, 2026.

The price of 24-karat gold per 10 grams also declined to Rs389,684, reflecting mild downward pressure in the local bullion market.

International Prices Also Edge Lower

In the global market, gold prices slipped by $2 to $4,328 per ounce as trading remained range-bound amid cautious investor sentiment.

Analysts said the slight decline reflects stability in global demand conditions, with investors closely monitoring inflation trends, interest rate expectations and geopolitical developments.

Market Sentiment Remains Cautious

Traders said gold prices continue to respond to shifting expectations around global monetary policy and safe-haven demand.

Despite the minor correction, bullion markets remain supported by ongoing economic uncertainty and intermittent geopolitical tensions.

Gold Still Near Historic High Levels

Analysts noted that despite recent fluctuations, gold remains near elevated historical levels, supported by sustained demand from investors seeking stability amid global uncertainty.

Market participants expect prices to remain sensitive to macroeconomic indicators and geopolitical developments in the near term, with limited directional movement in the absence of major global triggers.

Business & Finance / Industry

COMMERCIAL IMPORTERS: FPCCI URGES GOVT TO PROVIDE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about a minute ago

By Rizwan Bhatti

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has rejected the significant tax disparity introduced in the federal budget between commercial and industrial importers of industrial raw materials, urging the federal government to ensure a level playing field for commercial importers.

Addressing a press conference on Wednesday at Federation House, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Senior Vice President FPCCI said that allowing industrial importers to trade imported raw materials at an additional 3 percent VAT, as proposed in the Finance Bill, would further discourage commercial importers.

He demanded that commercial importers of industrial raw materials and industrial manufacturers be treated equally.

He warned that some measures announced in the budget would encourage the fake industrial units, promote the black economy, and cause substantial losses to the national exchequer.

The FPCCI and several other associations have urged the federal government and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to address this anomaly to ensure that industrial raw materials are treated as raw materials across the board.

On the occasion, Vice President FPCCI Asif Sakhi, former Vice President FPCCI Shabbir Hassan Mansha Churra and representatives of several associations including the Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA), Pakistan Artificial Leather Importers & Merchants (PALIMA),Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA), Pakistan Iron and Steel Merchants Association (PISMA) and Pakistan Plastic Importers Association (PPIA) were also present and demanded the same.

Magoon informed that currently commercial importers are bearing the brunt of disproportionate taxation; severely hindering their competitiveness and threatening the survival of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that rely on them.

He highlighted several critical discrepancies in the current and proposed tax regimes, noting that commercial importers are subject to an excessive additional tax burden of 6 to 9 percent in the form of Sales Tax and Withholding Tax (WHT) compared to import of same raw material by the industries.

He further said the Finance Bill's proposal allowing industrial importers to trade imported goods at a minimal 3 percent additional VAT, which would effectively discourage commercial importers and legitimize a practice beyond the scope of industrial manufacturing.

He added that the lack of competitiveness, coupled with fake refunds and adjustments, is pushing commercial importers out of the market and contributing to the growth of the undocumented economy.

He has urged the federal government to rectify discriminatory taxation policies against commercial importers of industrial raw materials to save billions of rupees revenue for the national exchequer. Magoon maintained that this highly discriminatory policy creates a severe lack of competitiveness in the market.

Shabbir Mansha said that commercial importers do not import raw materials for supermarkets; rather, they supply raw materials to SMEs. Therefore, taxes for industrial and commercial importers should be made equal.

"Trade of imported raw material is not an industry's job. This budget anomaly breeds flying invoices, encourages the misuse of industrial licenses, and severely damages the national exchequer", he mentioned.

He said the existing concession was introduced to facilitate genuine manufacturers importing raw materials for their own production. However, many industrial units, including allegedly fake manufacturers, have been importing raw materials under concessional treatment and subsequently selling them in the open market instead of consuming them in their own industries.

"Our cottage industries and SMEs rely entirely on commercial importers to source their raw materials. We strongly appeal to the authorities to ensure a level-playing field immediately", Mansha demanded.

Saqib Goodluck, Chairman of the Yarn Merchants Association, said that eliminating undocumented economic activities is a pressing need for the economy. He noted that commercial importers have not been given a level playing field for the past fifteen years, and the current budget has widened the disparity even further.

Iftikhar Ahmed Vohra, leader of the Plastic Importers Association, said that industrial raw materials are being sold in the market instead of being used in factories, and similar practices are occurring in other industries as well.

Saleem Makhati, Chairman of the Chemical and Dyes Merchants Association, said that there is no effective check-and-balance system for industrial importers, many of whom operate on an undocumented basis.

Asif Sakhi claimed that a number of fake industries have been registered to import raw material on concessional rate and to sold it in the open market.

DOCUMENTED INDUSTRY: LCCI, PFMA HIGHLIGHT NEGATIVE IMPACT

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association (PFMA) has expressed serious concern over the proposal in the Finance Bill 2026 to place the footwear sector under the Third Schedule, stating that the move may create serious practical difficulties for the industry, discourage documentation efforts, and place additional pressure on one of Pakistan's most labour-intensive manufacturing sectors.

Addressing a press conference at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), LCCI President Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol said the footwear sector is an extremely important part of the economy and its input in industrial growth and employment generation is significant. Chairman PFMA Rashad Islam, former chairman Mansoor Ahsan Sheikh, and Executive Committee Member Ahmed Hussain were present.

The LCCI President further said that placing the sector under the Third Schedule would have serious negative consequences. "Footwear is an extremely important sector, and its input in the economy is very high. Including it in the Third Schedule will have negative effects," he said. "No consultation was held with stakeholders while making this policy. Documented businesses are being disturbed, while the undocumented economy is being encouraged," he said. He urged the government to immediately reconsider the proposal.

Chairman PFMA Rashad Islam said the footwear industry fully supports documentation, taxation, and national revenue objectives, but emphasized that taxation policy must remain practical, rational, and aligned with industrial realities.

He said the sector is not demanding exemptions but a fair and workable system that does not undermine compliant businesses. "The footwear industry supports documentation and national revenue generation. However, placing the sector under the Third Schedule may unintentionally push business back towards the undocumented economy instead of expanding the tax base," he said.

The PFMA reiterated its readiness to cooperate with the government in strengthening POS integration, digital traceability, and documentation, but stressed that focus should remain on bringing the undocumented sector into the tax net rather than burdening compliant businesses.

The PFMA Chairman warned that nearly 75 percent of the sector remains undocumented, making it difficult for compliant businesses to compete under increased regulatory pressure. He urged the prime minister, finance minister, FBR authorities to reconsider the proposal in consultation with stakeholders.

PCJCCI CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF PAK-CHINA TIES

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) celebrated the enduring diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China at the PCJCCI Secretariat, Lahore, where Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Lahore, Sun Yan, was the chief guest.

The gathering brought together diplomats, business leaders, policymakers, academics, and representatives from various sectors to commemorate the historic relationship and discuss future avenues of cooperation.

The chief guest highly appreciated the role of PCJCCI in strengthening bilateral relations and promoting economic diplomacy between Pakistan and China. He acknowledged the PCJCCI's efforts in facilitating business-to-business engagement, cultural exchanges, investment promotion, and people-to-people connectivity.

The CG said "at a time when geopolitical tensions and conflicts continue to affect global trade, energy security, and economic stability, the Pakistan-China partnership stands as a model of peaceful cooperation and shared development." He reaffirmed China's commitment to working closely with Pakistan under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other mutually beneficial initiatives.

Nazir Hussain, President PCJCCI, said the enduring friendship between the two nations continues to create new opportunities for economic growth, technological advancement, industrial cooperation, and regional connectivity.

Lt Gen Nasser Khan Janjua (r), former National Security Advisor of Pakistan, stated that in a world increasingly challenged by conflicts, power rivalries, and economic uncertainties, the Pakistan-China friendship continues to provide a foundation for stability and constructive engagement. He observed that the CPEC represents a transformative vision for regional cooperation and connectivity, capable of fostering long-term economic growth and prosperity.

Adeel Munawar, Commercial Ambassador PCJCCI, said Pakistan and China are entering a new era of economic collaboration driven by innovation, digital transformation, industrial modernization, and enhanced trade connectivity.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, affirmed a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to further strengthen the Pakistan-China partnership and work collectively toward a future of peace, prosperity, and shared progress.

PCMA WARNS AGAINST PROPOSED DUTY HIKE ON SALT

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Chemicals Manufacturers Association (PCMA) has expressed serious concern over proposed increase in royalty and excise duty on salt for fiscal year 2026-27, warning that the move could significantly raise production costs and adversely affect Pakistan's industrial competitiveness.

Chairman PCMA Haroon Ali Khan in a statement said the salt-based industrial value chain, particularly the caustic soda industry, is a vital contributor to Pakistan's manufacturing sector, supplying essential raw materials to key industries including textiles, leather, soaps, detergents, paper, and other downstream sectors.

He maintained that salt royalty and excise duty were previously increased from Rs 150 per ton to Rs 430 per ton, representing an increase of approximately 186 percent. This substantial rise has already placed a significant financial burden on chemical manufacturers and related industries.

"Any further increase in salt royalty and excise duty will directly escalate production costs, weaken industrial competitiveness, and place additional pressure on domestic manufacturing," Haroon Ali Khan warned.

The PCMA chief stressed that locally produced caustic soda is primarily consumed within Pakistan's domestic market, where manufacturers have limited capacity to absorb rising input costs or transfer them to customers. As a result, additional taxation on a critical raw material could have far-reaching consequences for the entire industrial supply chain.

The PCMA urged the mines & minerals department Punjab, and other relevant authorities to engage in meaningful consultations with industry stakeholders before finalizing any proposed increase.

UOSC DETERMINATION: KATI URGES NEPRA TO ENSURE LEGAL CONSISTENCY

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Mushtaq Ghumman

ISLAMABAD: The Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) has urged the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) to ensure transparency and legal consistency in its forthcoming determination on Use of System Charges (UoSC), warning against inclusion of unjustified costs and absence of clarity on key parameters.

In its post-hearing comments submitted to the Nepra following the UoSC hearing held on June 11, 2026, the KATI raised serious concerns over the proposed framework, particularly the non-disclosure of uniform Transmission and Distribution (T&D) loss benchmarks and inclusion of charges not part of the federal government's motion.

The KATI noted that the government's motion explicitly called for determination of uniform T&D loss benchmarks in line with the Market Commercial Code. However, during proceedings, neither Disco-wise approved loss levels nor the methodology for deriving uniform benchmarks across voltage levels were shared with stakeholders.

The Association argued that determination of UoSC without simultaneously notifying T&D loss benchmarks would create significant uncertainty for wheeling consumers and prospective market participants, as loss assumptions are critical for financial modelling and commercial viability.

The KATI urged the Authority to either determine and notify uniform T&D loss benchmarks as part of the current proceedings or conduct a separate hearing before finalising them. It also called for disclosure of the financial impact of proposed loss factors to enable informed decision-making by market participants.

On the issue of surcharges, the KATI strongly opposed inclusion of Debt Servicing Surcharge (DSS) of Rs 3.23 per unit, stating that it was neither part of the Federal Government's motion nor legally justified within the current proceedings. Imposition of such a charge, it maintained, would be ultra vires and should be explicitly excluded from the determination.

The Association further raised concerns over the inclusion of cross-subsidy in UoSC for industrial consumers (B3 and B4 categories), arguing that it contradicts the government's February 2026 decision to eliminate cross-subsidy from industrial tariffs.

According to the KATI, embedding cross-subsidy within UoSC would effectively re-impose the same burden through an alternative mechanism, undermining the government's reform agenda and rendering wheeling commercially unattractive for industrial consumers.

The KATI emphasised that UoSC and T&D losses are network-related costs attributable to distribution companies and should be applied uniformly and transparently across all consumers to ensure a level playing field between regulated and open-access users.

The Association requested the Nepra to address these concerns in its final determination to ensure that the UoSC framework remains legally sound, commercially viable and aligned with the government's broader market liberalisation objectives.

Technology

PAKISTAN'S ITANZ WINS $5MN UAE PROJECT

- The contracts cover four tightly integrated technology pillars, says the company

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 15 hours ago
By BR Web Desk

ITANZ Technologies Limited announced on Wednesday that it had secured a long-term contract worth $5 million for a digital transformation program for a leading wholesale distribution conglomerate headquartered in the United Arab Emirates.

The development was shared in a notice to the Pakistan Stock Exchange today.

The contracts cover "4 tightly integrated technology pillars, i.e. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) backbone, a Customer and Supplier Intelligent Self-Service platform, an Enterprise Asset Management system and a combined Mobile Field Workforce solution.

The tech company said that all were unified through iTanz's proprietary integration framework and enriched with embedded Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced analytics capabilities.

The total engagement value stands at USD 5.00 million over the course of the next 5 years with an equal annual fee, the notice added.

"Under the terms of the Contract, the initial phase shall be initiated within 2026," the listed company informed the bourse.

iTANZ Technologies Limited was incorporated in Pakistan as a public limited company in 1990. The company was formerly known as Zahur Cotton Mills Limited.

In March 2025, the Lahore High Court approved the merger of the company and ITANZ Technology Private Limited (ITPL) with effect from October 01, 2023.

After the merger, the company's principal business activity included software development, installation and implementation, as well as other IT-related supplies and services. The company also provides consultancy services in the field of IT.

PAKISTAN'S IT EXPORTS SURPASS $4BN FOR FIRST TIME

- Sector records a robust year-on-year growth of 20 percent

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 18 hours ago

Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) sector has achieved a historic milestone, with export earnings crossing the $4 billion mark for the first time during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year, underscoring the industry's growing contribution to the national economy.

According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday morning, exports of IT and IT-enabled services—including earnings generated by software companies and freelancers—reached $4.184 billion during July-May FY2025-26, compared to $3.475 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

The sector recorded a robust year-on-year growth of 20 percent, with export receipts increasing by $709 million. The performance is particularly significant given the challenges faced by the industry during the year, including internet disruptions and geopolitical uncertainties.

Analysts attribute the continued growth in IT exports to supportive government policies, tax incentives, and sustained efforts to promote Pakistan's technology sector in international markets. Measures are aimed at facilitating foreign exchange inflows and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) have also contributed to the sector's expansion.

Despite a moderation in monthly inflows, export earnings remained strong. IT export receipts stood at $373 million in May 2026, compared to $423 million in April, 2026. With one month remaining before the close of the fiscal year, total exports are expected to approach $4.5 billion, although they may fall short of the government's target of $5 billion.

Commenting on the sector's performance, IT exporter Dr Noman Said has stated that Pakistan possesses significant untapped potential to further increase IT exports and attract higher foreign exchange earnings. However, he noted that several structural gaps continue to hinder the sector from realizing its full growth potential.

He emphasized that the IT industry has emerged as a key contributor to Pakistan's macroeconomic stability by supporting the current account balance, attracting investment inflows, and creating employment opportunities.

"Our country needs a comprehensive roadmap to strengthen the domestic IT ecosystem and sustain the impressive growth in exports," he said. "This requires a robust education and training framework to equip the workforce with in-demand digital skills, while simultaneously exploring new international markets and deepening penetration in existing ones."

The outlook for the sector remains positive following a series of incentives announced by the government in the federal budget. Among the key measures is the extension of the 0.25 percent Final Tax Regime (FTR) for IT exporters for the next three years, providing long-term policy certainty for businesses operating in the sector.

Additionally, the government has reduced the withholding tax on international transactions made through payment cards from 5 percent to 0.5 percent. Industry stakeholders believe these measures will improve the ease of doing business, enhance competitiveness, and encourage greater foreign exchange inflows.

Chairman of the Pakistan Freelancers Association (PAFLA), Ibrahim Amin, said freelancers have played a significant role in driving the growth of IT exports, contributing more than 20 percent of the sector's overall export receipts, crossing $1 billion.

He noted that the number of freelancers and digital workers in Pakistan continues to rise as awareness of freelancing opportunities and access to digital skills training increase among students and young professionals.

Looking ahead, Amin said the growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-related skills is expected to create new opportunities for Pakistani freelancers, further boosting export earnings and strengthening the country's position in the global digital economy.

GOOGLE BEGINS ROLLING OUT ANDROID 17 STABLE UPDATE FOR PIXEL PHONES

IT & Telecom

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Google has started rolling out the stable Android 17 update to eligible Pixel devices, introducing a range of new features focused on multitasking, privacy, security and system performance.

The company confirmed in a blog post that the update is now available for Pixel 6 and later smartphones, with a wider rollout planned for supported devices from other manufacturers throughout 2026. Google has also released the Android 17 source code to the Android Open Source Project (AOSP).

Android 17 Rolls Out to Pixel 6 and Later Devices

The update is being delivered to compatible Pixel smartphones beginning with the Pixel 6 series and newer models. Google also noted that select "advanced" Android devices will receive Gemini Intelligence features later this summer.

Android 17 represents one of Google's most feature-rich platform updates in recent years, with improvements spanning user interface design, security tools and multitasking capabilities.

New App Bubbles and Multitasking Features

One of the key additions in Android 17 is App Bubbles, which allows users to convert any app into a floating window that can remain on top of other applications for easier multitasking.

On larger devices such as foldables and tablets, Android 17 introduces a new bubble bar at the bottom of the screen to manage active floating apps more efficiently.

Foldable devices also gain a new 50/50 gaming layout, splitting the screen between gameplay and a dynamic on-screen controller. Google said this feature will roll out more broadly in the coming months.

Screen Recording and Location Privacy Upgrades

Android 17 adds a new Screen Reactions feature that allows users to record their face reactions via the front camera while capturing on-screen activity, enhancing content creation tools for social media users.

Privacy controls have also been expanded. Users now have access to a “one-time precise location” option, improved approximate location accuracy and a redesigned permission dialogue for location access settings.

Google has also introduced a more granular contact-sharing system, enabling users to share selected contacts with apps rather than granting access to their entire address book.

Security Enhancements and System Optimisation

The update includes new protections within Google’s Find Hub system. A “Mark as lost” feature now allows users to lock lost devices using biometric authentication.

Additional security improvements include updates to Live Threat Detection and Advanced Protection mode, aimed at improving real-time device security.

Android 17 also introduces an app memory limit system designed to prevent excessive RAM usage by background applications, helping improve overall device stability.

Design and Interface Changes

Beyond security and performance, Android 17 brings a series of visual refinements including an expanded dark theme, an option to hide app names on the home screen and several minor interface adjustments.

With its latest release, Google continues to emphasise a balance between usability, security and AI-powered enhancements across its Android ecosystem.

MICROSOFT UNVEILS NEXT-GENERATION SURFACE PRO, SURFACE LAPTOP POWERED BY SNAPDRAGON X2

IT & Telecom

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Microsoft has launched its latest Surface devices, introducing a new Surface Pro and Surface Laptop lineup powered by Qualcomm's next-generation Snapdragon X2 processors, marking a significant refresh of its portable computing portfolio.

The new devices aim to strengthen Microsoft's position in the premium Windows hardware market, combining enhanced performance, improved battery efficiency and updated design options.

Surface Pro Gets OLED Option and 120Hz Display

The new Surface Pro features a 13-inch touchscreen display and is available in Platinum, Black and Dune colour options. Microsoft says the device continues its focus on hybrid productivity, blending tablet portability with full laptop functionality.

Pricing for the Surface Pro starts at $1,499, with configurations featuring either a 10-core Snapdragon X2 Plus or a 12-core Snapdragon X2 Elite processor.

The display supports a 120Hz refresh rate and includes an optional OLED upgrade for improved contrast and colour accuracy.

Memory options range from 16GB to 64GB of RAM, while storage configurations span 256GB to 1TB. Microsoft claims the device can deliver up to 15.5 hours of local video playback on a single charge.

A fully configured top-tier model is priced at $3,549.

Surface Laptop Expands to Two Sizes

Alongside the Surface Pro, Microsoft also introduced a refreshed Surface Laptop available in 13.8-inch and 15-inch variants.

Pricing starts at $1,599 for the smaller model and $1,699 for the larger version.

Both models are powered by the same Snapdragon X2 processor options and support similar memory configurations as the Surface Pro. Storage begins at 256GB on the 13.8-inch model and 512GB on the 15-inch variant, with both scaling up to 1TB.

The 13.8-inch model is available in Platinum, Black, Dune and an exclusive Jade colourway.

Microsoft claims battery life of up to 20 hours on the 13.8-inch model and up to 19 hours on the 15-inch version, depending on usage.

Performance and Connectivity Focus

The new Surface lineup includes Wi-Fi 7 support and upgraded efficiency across both devices. Charging solutions also vary by model, with the smaller laptop shipping with a 39W power supply and the larger version using a 65W charger.

Microsoft says the new devices are designed to deliver improved performance for productivity workloads, creative applications and AI-enhanced features across Windows 11.

Available Now

All newly announced Surface devices are available for purchase through Microsoft's official online store.

The launch underscores Microsoft's continued push into ARM-based computing, as it competes with rival laptop makers in the premium ultraportable segment.

PAKISTAN'S IT EXPORTS DECLINE MONTH-ON-MONTH DESPITE STRONG ANNUAL GROWTH

IT & Telecom Pakistan

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Eid holidays weigh on May exports as sector maintains double-digit yearly growth

ISLAMABAD, June 17, 2026 — Pakistan's IT exports declined on a monthly basis in May 2026 due to fewer working days during the Eid holidays, although the sector continued to post strong double-digit growth compared with a year earlier.

According to the latest data, Pakistan's information technology exports stood at $373 million in May, up 13% from the same month last year. However, exports fell 12% compared with April, reflecting reduced business activity during the festive period.

Analysts attributed the monthly decline primarily to Eid-related holidays, which shortened the number of working days and temporarily affected export receipts from the country's technology sector.

IT Exports Maintain Strong Growth Momentum

Despite the monthly slowdown, Pakistan's IT industry continued to demonstrate robust growth.

During the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26 (11MFY26), cumulative IT exports reached $4.2 billion, representing a 21% increase compared with the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

The performance underscores the sector's growing contribution to Pakistan's export earnings and its increasing role in supporting economic growth.

Net IT Exports Remain Healthy

Net IT exports, measured as exports minus imports, stood at $314 million in May 2026.

The figure was 7% higher than the same month a year earlier, indicating that the sector continues to generate substantial foreign exchange inflows despite short-term fluctuations in export receipts.

Industry experts say Pakistan's IT sector remains among the country's fastest-growing export industries, supported by rising demand for software development, business process outsourcing and digital services.

Government Targets Higher Export Revenues

The government has projected IT exports of $4.5 billion for FY2025-26, implying annual growth of approximately 18%.

Looking further ahead, the government's "Uraan Pakistan" economic transformation plan targets annual IT exports of $10 billion by FY2028-29.

Achieving that objective would require a compound annual growth rate of roughly 27% over the next three years.

Long-Term Outlook Remains Positive

Analysts remain optimistic about the sector's long-term prospects, citing a growing pool of skilled technology professionals, expanding digital infrastructure and increasing participation in global technology markets.

While seasonal factors affected export performance in May, the sector's strong annual growth trend suggests Pakistan remains on track to achieve higher IT export revenues in the coming years.

Continued policy support, investment in digital infrastructure and expansion into international markets are expected to remain key drivers of future growth.

Business & Finance / Companies

JAZZCASH APP: GOVT OF PAKISTAN TREASURY BILLS LAUNCHED

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Tahir Amin

ISLAMABAD: JazzCash and Mobilink Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the State Bank of Pakistan, launched Government of Pakistan Treasury Bills on the JazzCash app.

For the first time, Pakistanis can invest in government-backed securities directly from a digital wallet, a development that extends formal investment access well beyond the country's approximately 1.4 million existing public market participants.

The launch represents a significant step in democratizing access to sovereign investment products and advancing Pakistan's financial inclusion agenda through digital channels.

The initiative was announced in the presence of Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue; Khurram Schehzad, Adviser to the Finance Minister; Omer M. Khan, Adviser on Debt Management, Finance Division; Aamir Ibrahim, Chairman JazzCash and Mobilink Bank; Murtaza Ali, CEO JazzCash; Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, CEO Mobilink Bank; and senior representatives from the Ministry of Finance and the State Bank of Pakistan.

Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, said, "Under the Prime Minister's vision for a digital economy, the Government is working to deepen Pakistan's financial markets, mobilise domestic savings and expand citizens' participation in the formal economy. A stronger economy requires more Pakistanis to have access to regulated financial assets beyond conventional savings products. By enabling investment in Government securities, starting with Treasury Bills (T-Bills) from as little as Rs. 5,000 through a trusted digital platform such as JazzCash, this initiative translates that broader vision into practical access for citizens while helping build a wider and more diversified domestic investor base."

Speaking at the event, Murtaza Ali, CEO JazzCash, said, "JazzCash is a key partner of the Ministry of Finance and the State Bank of Pakistan in advancing the Prime Minister's vision for a cashless economy. Inclusion cannot stop at payments. It must also give people access to trusted tools that help them save, invest and build financial resilience. With T-Bills on the JazzCash app, we are bringing a secure, government-backed investment product into an everyday mobile wallet experience, allowing customers to participate in formal financial markets through a journey that is simple, secure and intuitive."

Customers can access the product through the Banking & Finance section of the JazzCash app, review available T-Bills and complete their investment digitally. Before confirmation, the app displays key details including the purchase price, expected profit, applicable yield, maturity value and tax treatment. At maturity, the proceeds, net of applicable taxes, are credited directly to the customer's JazzCash account.

Access to Government of Pakistan T-Bills is now live on JazzCash app. The product initially offers 3-month T-Bills, with longer tenors planned for later phases. Eligible customers with a verified JazzCash account and an active Mobilink Bank deposit account can invest digitally, with Mobilink Bank acting as the regulated custodian and trustee.

JazzCash, working in coordination with the State Bank of Pakistan and the Ministry of Finance, aims to reach one million active investors through Government Treasury Bills and future investment instruments.

EIGHTEEN OPENS NEW SALES CENTRE

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

ISLAMABAD: EIGHTEEN on Wednesday inaugurated its new Sales Centre in New Blue Area, Islamabad, marking another milestone in bringing its world-class residential and commercial offerings to investors and homebuyers.

Strategically located in the heart of the capital, the new Sales Centre offers visitors personalised consultations, expert investment guidance, and a closer look at the lifestyle and opportunities that define Pakistan's premier golf community. EIGHTEEN's management reaffirmed the company's commitment to delivering an exceptional lifestyle experience within Pakistan's premier golf community.

NUTSHELL, M&P STRENGTHEN THE GLOBAL CONNECT

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Press Release

KARACHI: Nutshell Group has strengthened THE GLOBAL CONNECT, its flagship global thought leadership and economic cooperation platform, through a new strategic partnership with M&P Group.

The announcement was made at the MOSAIC FORUM in Cairo, where global and regional leaders gathered to discuss investment, policy, public affairs, and regional collaboration.

Launched in February 2026 by Nutshell Group, THE GLOBAL CONNECT was established to convene decision makers from emerging and frontier economies and translate dialogue into actionable strategy, durable partnerships, and stronger global influence. The platform brings together policymakers, global CEOs, regulators, investors, and technology leaders to generate practical insights and drive sustainable impact.

With M&P Group joining the initiative, THE GLOBAL CONNECT is further positioned to expand its international network, deepen cross-border engagement, and broaden its footprint across the Middle East, Africa, and other emerging regions.

"THE GLOBAL CONNECT was built to turn conversations into action," said Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Founder & Chairman, Nutshell Group. "With M&P Group's partnership, we are strengthening pathways for investment, business cooperation, and policy dialogue across regions shaping the future of the global economy."

"M&P Group is pleased to strengthen THE GLOBAL CONNECT by joining this important initiative," said Mustafa Moharram, Chairman, M&P Group. "Together, we aim to unlock new opportunities for investors, entrepreneurs, and policymakers across multiple regions."

PIONEER CEMENT LAUNCHES CAPTIVE SOLAR POWER PROJECT IN KHUSHAB

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: Pioneer Cement Limited has launched a 28-megawatt captive solar power project at its manufacturing facility in Chenki, Khushab.

The project is among the largest single-site solar installations completed in a single phase by a cement manufacturer in Pakistan, underscoring the company's commitment to sustainable and energy-efficient operations.

According to a material information disclosure shared by Pioneer Cement with its shareholders through a notice submitted to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Pioneer Cement has executed a contract with Zero Carbon (Private) Limited, an experienced renewable energy partner, for the development of a landmark 28MW Captive Solar Power Project at its manufacturing facility in Chenki, District Khushab.

Markets / Financial

SINDH ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF SIFC TO POSITION KARACHI AS REGIONAL FINANCIAL HUB

Budget 2026-27 Finance

June 18, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Murad Ali Shah unveils Sindh International Financial Centre initiative in Budget 2026-27 to attract global investment and strengthen Karachi's role in regional finance.

KARACHI: Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday announced the establishment of the Sindh International Financial Centre (SIFC), a landmark initiative aimed at transforming Karachi into a leading regional economic and commercial hub.

Presenting the Sindh Budget 2026-27, the chief minister said Karachi has historically served as Pakistan's commercial and financial heart, hosting the country's largest banks, capital markets, financial institutions and corporate headquarters. He noted that the city's strategic position as Pakistan's gateway to international trade and investment provides a strong foundation for becoming a world-class financial centre.

Murad Ali Shah said the Government of Sindh has initiated the process of establishing the Sindh International Financial Centre (SIFC) as a modern platform for investment, finance, innovation and dispute resolution. The project aims to create a comprehensive financial ecosystem capable of attracting both domestic and international investors.

According to the chief minister, the proposed SIFC will facilitate investment inflows, enhance investor confidence and support the mobilisation of capital for key sectors including infrastructure, energy, housing, technology, climate resilience and industrial development.

He stated that during the next fiscal year, the provincial government will undertake the necessary legal, regulatory and institutional groundwork required for the establishment of the financial centre. This process will involve extensive consultations with national and international stakeholders, financial institutions, investors and development partners.

The Sindh International Financial Centre is expected to position Karachi as a regional hub for infrastructure finance, Islamic finance, climate finance, financial technology (FinTech) and international commercial services. The initiative reflects the government's broader vision of integrating Sindh more closely with global financial markets and investment networks.

To strengthen the business environment, the government will also explore the establishment of modern commercial courts, international arbitration centres and mediation facilities. These measures are intended to provide faster dispute resolution, greater certainty in commercial transactions and improved investor protection.

Murad Ali Shah emphasised that the SIFC would help attract global capital, create high-value employment opportunities and enhance Karachi's competitiveness in the regional economy. He added that the project would further reinforce Sindh's role as a gateway for investment and economic growth in Pakistan and beyond.

The chief minister said the Sindh government will work closely with the federal government and relevant national institutions to develop a supportive legal and regulatory framework. Planned measures include streamlined investor onboarding procedures, visa facilitation, simplified licensing processes, efficient regulatory approvals and competitive investment incentives.

In addition, mechanisms will be introduced to facilitate cross-border capital flows and improve ease of doing business for international investors seeking opportunities in Pakistan.

The government has already identified three potential locations within Karachi's commercial corridor for the proposed financial centre. These sites offer strong connectivity to Jinnah International Airport, the M-9 Motorway and the city's major business districts. The final location will be selected following a detailed feasibility assessment.

Funds have been allocated in the Sindh Budget 2026-27 for the preparation of an internationally bankable feasibility study and implementation framework, marking a significant step towards turning the vision into reality.

Describing the initiative as more than just an infrastructure development project, Murad Ali Shah said the Sindh International Financial Centre represents a strategic effort to position Karachi among the emerging financial centres of the region. He added that the project would deepen financial markets, attract foreign investment and create new economic opportunities for future generations.

The chief minister concluded by stating that the SIFC reflects Sindh's ambition to connect with global capital, innovation and opportunity while driving sustainable economic growth and strengthening Pakistan's position in the regional financial landscape.

PAKISTAN RECORDS SHARP REBOUND IN FDI AS INVESTMENT INFLOWS REACH US$214 MILLION

Finance

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Net foreign investment surges in May led by China, UAE and Hong Kong

ISLAMABAD, June 17, 2026 — Pakistan recorded a sharp rebound in foreign direct investment (FDI) in May 2026, with net inflows rising nearly 293% month-on-month to $214 million, supported by stronger investment from China, the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong.

According to the latest data, net FDI stood at $214 million in May compared with $54 million in April.

Analysts said the sharp increase was partly due to a low base effect in April, when inflows were weighed down by an outflow in the cement sector following the divestment of Attock Cement.

Strong Recovery After April Weakness

The latest figures reflect a notable recovery in investor sentiment after a subdued performance in the previous month.

However, cumulative net FDI during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26 (11MFY26) remained at $1.623 billion, marking a 28% decline compared with the same period last year.

Economists said that while monthly improvements are encouraging, sustained inflows are needed to support long-term economic stability and growth.

China, UAE and Hong Kong Lead Investments

China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Hong Kong were the leading sources of investment inflows during May.

China remained the dominant contributor, reflecting ongoing bilateral economic cooperation and continued investment activity across key sectors.

Power Sector Attracts Largest Share

Sector-wise, the power sector received the highest foreign investment during the month, followed by financial businesses.

The inflows highlight the strategic importance of energy infrastructure in Pakistan's investment landscape, while financial sector participation signals growing investor interest in banking and related services.

Outlook for Investment Flows

Foreign direct investment remains a key source of external financing for Pakistan, supporting industrial growth, employment creation and foreign exchange stability.

Analysts said that macroeconomic stability, consistent policy direction and structural reforms will be critical in attracting higher investment levels going forward.

While annual FDI remains below last year's levels, the strong rebound in May suggests improving investor sentiment as Pakistan continues efforts to strengthen economic fundamentals and attract foreign capital.

RECORD REMITTANCES PUSH PAKISTAN'S CURRENT ACCOUNT INTO SURPLUS IN MAY 2026

Finance Pakistan Top stories

June 17, 2026Hamza Shahnawaz

Current account posts $459 million surplus as remittances hit all-time high

ISLAMABAD, June 17, 2026 — Pakistan's current account swung to a surplus of $459 million in May 2026, reversing a deficit of $276 million recorded in April, as record-high remittances and lower imports strengthened the country's external position.

The latest data lifted the cumulative current account balance for the first eleven months of fiscal year 2025-26 (11MFY26) to a surplus of $255 million, compared with a deficit of $204 million in the same period last year.

Record Remittances Support External Account

Analysts attributed the sharp improvement primarily to record workers' remittances, which reached $4.251 billion in May, the highest monthly inflow on record.

The strong inflows from overseas Pakistanis helped offset the trade deficit and provided crucial support to the country's balance of payments.

The secondary income account recorded inflows of $4.421 billion during the month, while outflows remained limited at $38 million.

Trade Deficit Remains Significant

Pakistan continued to post a sizeable deficit in merchandise trade despite the improvement in the overall current account.

Goods exports stood at $2.368 billion in May, while imports were recorded at $5.686 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of $3.318 billion.

Economists said the figures underscore Pakistan's continued dependence on imported goods despite efforts to boost exports and contain external imbalances.

Services Sector Records Surplus

The services sector provided additional support to the external account.

Services exports amounted to $837 million, while imports were $809 million, generating a services trade surplus of $28 million during the month.

The positive balance helped offset some of the pressure from the goods trade deficit.

Primary Income Account Stays Under Pressure

The primary income account, which includes profit repatriation, investment income and interest payments, remained in deficit.

Pakistan recorded a negative balance of $634 million in May, reflecting ongoing external payment obligations.

Outlook for External Sector

Economists said the sustainability of Pakistan's current account position will depend on continued remittance growth, stronger exports and prudent import management.

The surplus recorded in May is expected to support foreign exchange reserves and strengthen overall macroeconomic stability.

However, analysts cautioned that maintaining a sustained surplus over the longer term will require structural improvements in exports, investment inflows and productivity.

With remittances reaching record levels and import growth remaining contained, Pakistan's external sector has shown renewed resilience heading into the final month of FY2025-26.

Fuel & Energy

OIL RISES 1PC ON US-IRAN DEAL DOUBTS

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Reuters

NEW YORK: Oil prices gained nearly 1 percent on Wednesday after US President Donald Trump said the new ceasefire agreement with Iran was not final and the Iran war could resume if he is unsatisfied, but concerns over excess supply next year limited the gains.

Brent crude futures settled 59 cents, or 0.75 percent, higher at USD79.55 a barrel, and US West Texas Intermediate gained 74 cents, or 0.97 percent, to USD76.79.

Trump said on Wednesday that a memorandum of understanding with Iran was not final, and that he could resume a bombing campaign if he did not like it or if Iran did not "behave". The US and Iran on Sunday said they had agreed on terms to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

There's "still a bit of uncertainty in terms of the US situation… (it) makes sense for oil to bounce back from these levels after staging what has been quite a sharp decline in the last few days," said Fawad Razaqzada, market analyst at City Index and FOREX.com.

There were fresh Israeli air strikes and artillery fire in several towns of southern Lebanon on Wednesday. Lebanese security sources said Hezbollah had also launched two drone attacks on Israeli forces in the south.

The memorandum calls for a halt to hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah group in Lebanon.

On the supply side, US crude oil inventories fell for a 10th straight week last week as demand surged, pushing total stockpiles to their lowest level since 1985, as the Iran war continued to upend global energy markets, the US Energy Information Administration said on Wednesday.

"The US and the rest of the world continue to draw down strategic inventory reserves as well as commercial inventories in an attempt to mitigate the disruption in the Middle East," said Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates.

However, a supply glut looms on the horizon. In its first look at 2027, the IEA said the oil market will enter a significant supply overhang, with global supply set to surge by 8 million barrels per day and demand rising by just 2 million.

In the near term, the agency said the Iran-US deal should provide an opportunity to replenish depleted inventories or build new strategic reserves.

"Markets may be underpricing the depth of the supply glut coming online," said Crispus Nyaga, research analyst at Empire FX.

Still, industry officials say a full return to pre-war production and refining levels is likely to take weeks, months or even years.

US NATGAS FUTURES FALL

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Reuters

NEW YORK: US natural gas futures fell more than 3 percent on Wednesday as analysts anticipated the US Energy Information Administration's weekly report would show a larger-than-normal build in stocks, and as a cooler weather forecast and easing demand also weighed.

Front-month gas futures for July delivery on the New York Mercantile Exchange traded 10 cents lower, or 3.1 percent, to USD3.14 per million British thermal units as of 10:20 a.m. ET.

"Relatively high storage inventories in the injection season have provided reassurance to market participants, due in part to strong associated gas production resulting from elevated oil prices over the past several months," said Zhen Zhu, managing consultant at C.H. Guernsey and Company in Oklahoma City.

Financial group LSEG showed average gas output in the US Lower 48 states at 109.4 billion cubic feet per day so far in June, down from 109.7 bcfd in May and a monthly record high of 110.6 bcfd in December 2025. Global oil prices have been elevated since the onset of the US-Israeli war on Iran in late February.

The US EIA's weekly gas storage report is due on Thursday.

Analysts projected it would show the surplus of gas in inventory would rise to 6.1 percent above normal during the week ended June 12, up from about 6.0 percent above normal in the previous week.

"Prices remain under bearish pressure primarily because robust domestic production has thus far been sufficient to meet the increase in demand during the early summer season," Zhu added.

LSEG forecast average gas demand in the Lower 48 states, including exports, would fall from 104.2 bcfd this week to 103 bcfd next week, as weather in the coming weeks is expected to be slightly cooler than previously expected.

Benchmark Dutch wholesale gas prices declined early on Wednesday as the market evaluated the prospects of a US-Iran agreement and as higher temperatures are expected in Europe.

INDIAN JET FUEL EXPORTS TO EUROPE HEADING BACK TO 2025 LEVELS, DATA SHOWS

- Around 62,000 barrels per day of jet fuel have been imported by the EU

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 15 hours ago
India-flagged tanker Desh Garima unloads crude oil at an offloading terminal after transiting the Strait of Hormuz, in Mumbai, India, April 30, 2026. Photo: Reuters

By Reuters

LONDON: India's exports of jet fuel to Europe have risen to levels seen since before an EU ban was placed on Russian-origin fuel in January, data from Kpler and LSEG shows.

Around 62,000 barrels per day of jet fuel have been imported by the EU, going to Italy from India's Jamnagar refinery, data from Kpler shows.

LSEG data similarly shows around 64,000 bpd of fuel being imported by the EU.

This is the highest since December 2025, when imports stood at roughly 89,000 bpd, per both data platforms.

A European Union ban on products derived from Russian oil took effect on January 21 aimed at curbing oil revenue which Moscow uses to fund the Ukraine war.

However, Reliance operates two refineries at its Jamnagar complex - one geared for exports and one for India's domestic market.

It said last year that it had stopped processing Russian crude at its export-oriented facility.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration in April renewed a waiver allowing countries to buy Russian oil and petroleum products loaded on vessels through May 16. The cargoes were loaded around May 16 and May 25, data from LSEG and Kpler showed.

Last year, India's exports of jet fuel to the EU averaged 89,000 bpd, and made up 16% of its total imports.

DISCOS ROLL OUT REDESIGNED ELECTRICITY BILLS ACROSS PAKISTAN

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 17 hours ago

By BR Web Desk

Distribution Companies (DISCOs) across Pakistan have introduced a redesigned electricity bill format, marking a significant step in the Ministry of Energy (Power Division)'s consumer-centric reform agenda.

As per a statement released by the Ministry of Energy on Wednesday, the new bill format has been developed with a focus on simplicity, readability, and an improved consumer experience, presenting key billing information in a structured and accessible manner.

"Consumers can now quickly understand their electricity consumption, billing components, and payment obligations without navigating unnecessary complexity," it said.

The initiative was driven by feedback received from consumers and stakeholders over the years.

The ministry shared that it received numerous complaints and observations regarding the previous bill format, which many consumers found difficult to understand due to its overcrowded layout, excessive information, and complex presentation.

"The inclusion of multiple technical details, repetitive content, and non-essential information often made it challenging for consumers to quickly identify and comprehend key billing data.

"In response to this feedback, and consistent with its ongoing commitment to transparency and service delivery, the ministry took the initiative to fundamentally redesign the bill format," it said.

The redesigned electricity bill incorporates several enhancements aimed at improving the consumer experience.

According to the statement, the new format features a simplified and uncluttered design that enhances readability, with billing amounts, due dates, and consumption details presented clearly and prominently. Information has been better organised to allow consumers to grasp their bill at a glance, while reduced visual complexity ensures the format is accessible to individuals from all backgrounds.

The new bills also integrate QR codes, enabling consumers to access supplementary information and digital services conveniently.

Currently, LESCO, GEPCO, and MEPCO electricity bills have started printing on a new format, while those of IESCO will start printing from Monday. The rest of the DISCOs are under process of procurement and shall start printing the new format on completion of the process.

UAE'S FUJAIRAH MARINE BUNKER SALES HIT RECORD LOW IN MAY

- High-sulphur marine fuel sales dropped 15% over the same period to 31,601 cubic metres

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 20 hours ago
By Reuters

SINGAPORE: Marine fuel sales at the United Arab Emirates' Fujairah port extended declines in May to hit a record low, latest data showed, as cargo replenishment stayed constrained after the Middle East war crimped shipments out of the Strait of Hormuz.

Bunker sales, excluding lubricants, totalled 96,721 cubic metres (about 95,800 metric tons) for May, showed latest Fujairah Oil Industry Zone data published by S&P Global.

Low-sulphur marine fuel sales fell 27% from the prior month to 65,120 cubic metres.

High-sulphur marine fuel sales dropped 15% over the same period to 31,601 cubic metres.

Low-sulphur marine gasoil sales slipped 2% to 7,157 cubic metres, while other marine gasoils totalled 381 cubic metres.

The market share of low-sulphur bunkers narrowed to 67% in May versus 71% in April, while high-sulphur bunkers narrowed to 33% versus 29%.

OIL RISES 1% ON US-IRAN DEAL DOUBTS; IEA WARNS OF SUPPLY GLUT

- Brent crude futures were up 89 cents, or around 1.1%, at $79.85 a barrel at 11:34 a.m. ET (1534 GMT)

Published June 17, 2026 Updated about 10 hours ago
By Reuters

NEW YORK: Oil prices rose more than 1% Wednesday after U.S. President Donald Trump said the new ceasefire agreement with Iran was not final and the Iran war could resume if he is unsatisfied, but concerns over excess supply next year limited the gains.

Brent crude futures were up 89 cents, or around 1.1%, at $79.85 a barrel at 11:34 a.m. ET (1534 GMT), and U.S. West Texas Intermediate gained 91 cents, or 1.2%, to $76.96. Both contracts hit their lowest since early March earlier in the session.

Trump said on Wednesday that a memorandum of understanding with Iran was not final, and that he could resume a bombing campaign if he did not like it or if Iran did not "behave".

"(There's) still a bit of uncertainty in terms of the U.S. situation … (it) makes sense for oil to bounce back from these levels after staging what has been quite a sharp decline in the last few days," said Fawad Razaqzada, market analyst at City Index and FOREX.com.

There were fresh Israeli air strikes and artillery fire in several southern towns of Lebanon throughout Wednesday. Lebanese security sources said Hezbollah had also launched two drone attacks on Israeli forces in the south.

The memorandum, signed on Sunday, calls for a halt to hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah group in Lebanon.

On the supply side, U.S. crude oil inventories fell for a tenth straight week last week as demand surged, pushing total stockpiles to their lowest level since 1985 as the Iran war continues to upend global energy markets, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said on Wednesday.

"The U.S. and the rest of the world continue to draw down strategic inventory reserves as well as commercial inventories in an attempt to mitigate the disruption in the Middle East," said Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates.

However, a supply glut looms on the horizon. In its first look at 2027, the IEA said the oil market will enter a significant supply overhang, with global supply set to surge by 8 million barrels per day and demand rising by just 2 million bpd.

In the near term, the agency said the Iran-U.S. deal should provide an opportunity to replenish depleted inventories or build new strategic reserves.

"Markets may be underpricing the depth of the supply glut coming online," said Crispus Nyaga, research analyst at Empire FX.

Still, industry officials say a full return to pre-war production and refining levels is likely to take weeks, months or even years.

POWER DISCOS LAUNCH NEW EASY ELECTRICITY BILL FORMAT

Energy National

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Power distribution companies roll out simplified billing system with clearer layout, QR codes, and improved transparency for consumers nationwide.

Electricity consumers across Pakistan are set to see a major change in how their monthly bills look, as Distribution Companies (DISCOs) have rolled out a redesigned electricity bill format under the Ministry of Energy's Power Division reform agenda—aimed at making billing simpler, clearer, and more consumer-friendly.

The move marks one of the most visible overhauls in recent years in the country's power sector communication system, with officials claiming the new format is designed to eliminate confusion and improve transparency for millions of households.

According to the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), the redesigned bill focuses on simplicity, readability, and structured presentation, allowing consumers to quickly understand key details such as electricity consumption, charges, due dates, and payment obligations without navigating complex breakdowns.

The previous bill format had long been criticized by consumers for being overcrowded and difficult to interpret, with excessive technical data, repeated information, and cluttered layouts often making it hard for users to identify basic billing figures. Authorities say the redesign directly responds to years of public complaints and stakeholder feedback.

Officials stated that the overhaul is part of a broader push toward consumer-centric governance and digital transformation in the power sector. The new bill layout highlights essential information more prominently, reduces visual complexity, and organizes billing components in a more logical structure.

One of the key features of the revamped system is the introduction of QR codes, enabling consumers to instantly access additional billing details, digital services, and online support options through smartphones.

The rollout has already begun in major electricity companies. Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO), and Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) have started issuing bills in the new format, while Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) is expected to switch from Monday.

Other DISCOs are still in the procurement phase and will adopt the new format gradually once implementation processes are completed.

The Ministry of Energy (Power Division) praised consumer feedback for driving the reform, stating that the redesign reflects its commitment to transparency, efficiency, and improved service delivery across Pakistan's power distribution network.

Energy officials believe the simplified bill format will not only reduce consumer confusion but also improve payment compliance and strengthen trust between electricity providers and the public—at a time when the sector continues to grapple with high costs and operational challenges.

K-ELECTRIC EMERGES BIGGEST WINNER AS GOVERNMENT RAISES ITS POWER SUBSIDY BY 30%

Budget 2026-27 Energy

June 17, 2026Faisal Shahnawaz

Despite overall subsidy cuts, K-Electric secures Rs163 billion allocation, becoming the biggest beneficiary in the 2026-27 power budget

KARACHI: While the federal government plans to reduce overall power sector subsidies in the upcoming fiscal year, Karachi-based utility K-Electric has emerged as the biggest beneficiary, securing a hefty 30 percent increase in tariff differential subsidy under the budget for 2026-27.

Budget documents reveal that K-Electric will receive Rs163 billion in tariff differential subsidy during fiscal year 2026-27, significantly higher than the Rs125 billion allocated in the outgoing fiscal year. The increase comes despite broader efforts by the government to curb subsidy spending and improve fiscal discipline.

The latest budget estimates show that total power sector subsidies will decline to Rs830 billion in 2026-27 from Rs893 billion in the current fiscal year. However, K-Electric's allocation has bucked the trend, sparking questions over the government's continued preferential treatment toward the country's sole vertically integrated power utility.

The subsidy increase translates into an additional Rs38 billion for K-Electric at a time when several other subsidy programs are either being reduced or kept largely unchanged.

According to the subsidy breakdown, support for agricultural tube wells in Balochistan has been cut to Rs3 billion from Rs4 billion. Similarly, the subsidy for the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (erstwhile FATA) has been reduced to Rs34 billion from Rs40 billion.

The government has also allocated Rs248 billion for inter-DISCO tariff differential subsidies, almost unchanged from Rs249 billion in the outgoing fiscal year.

Meanwhile, tariff differential subsidies for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) have been increased to Rs81 billion from Rs74 billion, while the allocation for the Pakistan Energy Revolving Fund (PERA) remains unchanged at Rs48 billion.

A major portion of the subsidy package, Rs252 billion, has been earmarked for the containment of the country's ever-growing circular debt crisis, which continues to plague Pakistan's energy sector and public finances.

Energy sector analysts note that the increase in K-Electric's subsidy allocation comes amid persistent concerns over power sector inefficiencies, rising electricity tariffs, and the mounting burden on taxpayers. They argue that despite repeated reforms, the government continues to rely heavily on subsidies to bridge tariff gaps and maintain power sector operations.

With K-Electric securing one of the largest increases in subsidy allocations despite overall spending cuts, the budget figures are likely to reignite debate over the fairness and sustainability of Pakistan's power subsidy framework and the growing fiscal cost of keeping the lights on.

Rates

SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: Karachi Shipping Intelligence report incorporating changes till 7 am on Wednesday (June 17, 2026).

Alongside East Wharf

Berth No.	Ship	Working	Agent	Berthing Date
OP-2	Marine Xena	Load HSFO	Alphine Marine Services	16-06-2026
B-4/B-5	Cs Niwa	-	Sharaf Shipping Agency	28-05-2026
B-6/B-7	Papu	Dis/Load Containers	Freiht Connecti Pakistan	28-05-2026
B-11/B-12	Helena K	Disc Rock Phosphate	Wma Shipcare Services	16-06-2026
B-13/B-14	Yaesu	Disc Soya Bean Seeds	Ocean Services	15-06-2026
B-14/B-15	Effie	Disc General Cargo	Seahawks Asia Global	11-06-2026
B-16/B-17	Tianjin Venture	Disc Di (Dap)	Bulk Shipping Agencies	13-06-2026
Num-1	Al Danish 1	Load. Rice	Noor Sons	01-05-2026

Num-1	Al Hamdan	Disc. PHI	Al Faizan International	26-05-2026
Num-1	Al Danish 1	Disc. Tire	Noor Sons	01-05-2026
Num-1	Muslim	Disc. Rice	Noor Sons	17-05-2026
Num-1	Al Ashqan 1	Load. Rice	Al Faizan International	28-05-2026

Alongside WEST Wharf

B-21	Ndl Ten	Load Rice	Tradelink	16-06-2026
B-24	Stol Norland	Disc Lube Oil	Asia Marine	16-06-2026
B-29/B-30	Sibi	Dis/Load Containers	Pakistan Nation Ship Corp	16-06-2026

Alongside SOUTH Wharf

Sapt-1	Kmtc Mombasa	Dis/Load Containers	United Marine Agency	16-06-2026
Sapt-2	Ever Lifing	Dis/Load Containers	Green Pak Shipping	15-06-2026
Sapt-4	Esl Mundra	Dis/Load Containers	Gac Pakistan	15-06-2026

Expected Sailing

Name of Vessel	Expected Date	Expected Arrival Cargo	Agent
Esl Mundra		17-06-2026	Disc/Load Containers

Expected Arrivals

Liatris	17-06-2026	D/9500 Chemical	Alpine Marine Services
Kmtc Mundra	17-06-2026	D/L Container	United Marine Agencies
Amilla	17-06-2026	L/47700 Clinkers	Bulk Shipping Agencies
Benita	18-06-2026	D/L Container	Alpine Marine Services
Tarlan	18-06-2026	D/L Container	Interline Shipping
Hyundai Brave	18-06-2026	D/L Container	United Marine Agencies
MscEmanuela	18-06-2026	D/L Container	Msc Agency Pakistan
UssamaBhum	18-06-2026	D/L Container	Msc Agency Pakistan
CmaCgm Bianca	18-06-2026	D/L Container	CmaCgm Pakistan
Lucia	18-06-2026	D/L Container	Star Shipping
Dede Korkut	18-06-2026	D/L Container	Ap Line
Palm Marine	18-06-2026	L/2000 Rice	Tradelink International
Kian	18-06-2026	L/1800 Rice	Tradelink International
Ndl Seven	18-06-2026	L/1600 Rice	Tradelink

Al Joudi 1	18-06-2026	L/2000 Rice	International Tradelink International

Ship Sailed

Name of Vessel	Departure Date	Ships Departures Cargo	Agent
Southern Wolf	17-06-2026	Tanker	-
Seaspan Brilliance	17-06-2026	Container	-
NykFutago	17-06-2026	Container	-
Meghna Prestige	17-06-2026	Clinkers	-
Gfs Perfect	17-06-2026	Container	-
Geum Gang	17-06-2026	Tanker	-
Marine Ista	17-06-2026	Tanker	-
P Aliki	17-06-2026	Tanker	-

KIBOR INTERBANK OFFERED RATES

KARACHI: Kibor interbank offered rates on Wednesday (June 17, 2026). ========================== KIBOR...

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

KARACHI: Kibor interbank offered rates on Wednesday (June 17, 2026).

KIBOR

Tenor	BID	OFFER
1-Week	11.39	11.89
2-Week	11.43	11.93
1-Month	11.49	11.99
3-Month	11.77	12.02
6-Month	12.94	12.19
9-Month	12.04	12.54
1-Year	12.09	12.59

Data source: SBP

LME OFFICIAL PRICES

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

LONDON: The following were Tuesday official prices.

ALUMINIUM

CONTRACT	BID	OFFER
Cash	3358.50	3359.00
3-month	3388.50	3389.50

COPPER

CONTRACT	BID	OFFER
Cash	13681.50	13682.00
3-month	13760.00	13765.00

ZINC

CONTRACT	BID	OFFER
Cash	3548.00	3550.00
3-month	3569.00	3571.00

NICKEL

CONTRACT	BID	OFFER
Cash	17625.00	17630.00
3-month	17825.00	17835.00

LEAD

CONTRACT	BID	OFFER
Cash	1955.00	1956.00
3-month	1972.50	1973.50

Source: London Metals Exchange.

PMEX DAILY TRADING REPORT

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: On Wednesday, at PMEX, the total traded value of Metals, Energy, COTS, Indices, and Agricultural commodities stood at PKR 30.933 billion with 93,307 lots traded.

The highest activity was recorded in Gold (PKR 14.495 billion) followed by NSDQ100 (PKR 5.752 billion), COTS (PKR 4.749 billion), Platinum (PKR 1.037 billion), Silver (PKR 1.035 billion), Japan Equity 225 (PKR 774.708 million), SP500 (PKR 740.545 million), Crude Oil (PKR 564.973 million), Brent (PKR 478.092 million), Soybean (PKR 361.006 million), DJ (PKR 262.225 million), Copper (PKR 207.051 million), Palladium (PKR 152.416 million), Wheat (PKR 108.388 million), Natural Gas (PKR 89.485 million), Cotton (PKR 79.375 million), Aluminum (PKR 27.164 million), Corn (PKR 17.342 million) and Maize LD (PKR 1.218 million).

In Agricultural commodities, a total of 100 lots were traded, amounting to PKR 567.329 million.

ACTIVITIES OF KARACHI PORT TRUST, PORT QASIM

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: The Karachi Port Trust handled 89,782 Tons of Cargo Comprising 67,100 Tons of Import Cargo and 22,682 Tons of Export Cargo during last 24 hrs ending at 0700 hours.

The Total Import Cargo of 67,100 Tons Comprised of 42,990 Tons of Containerized Cargo, 3,222 Tons of Bulk Cargo, 5,037 Tons of (Dap), 6,457 Tons of Rock Phosphate, 319 Tons of Soya Beans Seeds and 3,105 Tons of Liquid Cargo.

The Total Export Cargo of 22,682 Tons Comprised of 18,463 Tons of Containerized Cargo, 700 Tons of Bulk Cargo, 1,700 Tons of Clinkers, 319 Tons of Rice and 1,500 Tons of Liquid Cargo.

There are six ships namely Marine Ista, Stolt Norland, Ndl Ten, Sibi, KMTE Mombasa and Marine Xena at Berth at Karachi Port Trust.

Eight ships namely Southern Wolf, Seaspan Brilliance, NykFutago, Meghna Prestige, GFS Perfect, Geum Gang, Marine Ista and P Aliki sailed from Karachi Port Trust.

Port Qasim

Atotal of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, a bulk cargo carrier ‘Abdullah’ left the port on Wednesday morning while another ship Gas carrier ‘Gas Aurora’ is expected to sail on afternoon.

A cargo volume of 57,733 comprising 41,367 tonnes imports cargo and 16,366 tonnes export cargo was handled at the Port, during the last 24 hours.

There are 10 ships at outer anchorage of the port, out of them a bulk cargo carrier namely, Silver Eternity and two more ships, Metro Mistral and Spirit Bertram carrying Coal, Mogas and Containers are expected to take berthsat PIBT, FOTCO and QICT respectively on Wednesday, 17thJune-2026, while two more container ships, Al-Bert-P and Nile Dutch Lionare due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday, 18th June-2026 and three more ships, MSC Mexico V, MSC Tia V and Hang Young Chang Shang are due to arrive on Friday, 19th June-2026.

KSE-100 ENDS MARGINALLY HIGH

Published June 18, 2026 Updated about 2 hours ago

By Recorder Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) ended Wednesday's session on a marginally positive note as profit-taking after the previous two days' strong rally restricted gains, although easing concerns over global oil prices and improving geopolitical stability continued to support investor sentiment.

The benchmark KSE-100 Index added 118.04 points, or 0.07 percent, to close at 180,511.02 points compared to the previous close of 180,392.98 points. The market remained highly volatile during the session, with the index touching an intraday high of 181,357.70 points before retreating to an intraday low of 179,564.17 points as investors locked in profits in several heavyweight sectors.

BRIndex100 closed at 20,012.09 points, gaining 40.48 points, or 0.20 percent, with a total turnover of 814.08 million shares. BRIndex30 ended at 73,899.61 points, up by 619.32 points, or 0.85 percent, on a turnover of 495.32 million shares.

According to Topline Securities, despite ending in positive territory, the market witnessed significant intraday volatility as investors engaged in profit-taking following the strong rally recorded over the previous two trading sessions.

Investor sentiment, however, remained supported by easing concerns over global oil prices and improving expectations regarding geopolitical stability, particularly following recent developments surrounding a potential US-Iran agreement and the anticipated reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Topline Securities further noted that index heavyweights FATIMA, Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), Oil and Gas Development Company (OGDC), Millat Tractors (MTL) and Shifa International Hospitals (SHFA) emerged as the primary drivers of upside momentum, collectively contributing 611 points to the benchmark index's gain.

Trading activity in the regular market remained robust. Ready market turnover increased to 1.231 billion shares from 1.224 billion shares recorded a day earlier slightly eased to Rs69.22 billion from Rs70.22 billion in the previous session.

Market capitalization continued its upward trajectory, increasing to Rs20.125 trillion from Rs20.053 trillion previously, reflecting a net increase of approximately Rs72.46 billion.

Market breadth, however, turned negative as declining stocks outnumbered advancing ones. In the ready market, 206 companies closed higher, 259 declined and 30 remained unchanged out of 495 active companies.

Trading activity in the ready market was led by Service Long March, which recorded a massive turnover of 189.43 million shares and closed at Rs25.90. Kohinoor Spinning followed with 72.28 million shares, ending at Rs6.48, while K-Electric registered a turnover of 53.63 million shares and closed at Rs8.36.

On the price performance front, Pakistan Engineering Company Limited emerged as the top gainer, advancing Rs64 to close at Rs703.99, followed by Shifa International Hospitals Limited, which gained Rs43.10 to settle at Rs541.06. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited (B) shed Rs583.43 to close at Rs17,454, while Siemens (Pakistan) Engineering declined Rs28 to settle at Rs1,522.19.

The BR Automobile Assembler Index emerged among the top performers, gaining 524.11 points, or 1.85 percent, to close at 28,885.28 points with a turnover of 9.86 million shares. The BR Oil and Gas Index advanced by 174.36 points, or 1.13 percent, to settle at 15,671.72 points on a turnover of 108.39 million shares.

The BR Cement Index added 65.49 points, or 0.51 percent, to close at 13,019.23 points with volumes of 65.45 million shares. On the downside, the BR Commercial Banks Index declined by 526.39 points, or 0.86 percent, to 60,679.23 points despite generating a healthy turnover of 73.51 million shares.

Similarly, the BR Power Generation and Distribution Index fell by 276.82 points, or 0.94 percent, to close at 29,133.45 points, while the BR Tech and Communication Index slipped 17 points, or 0.42 percent, to settle at 4,047.85 points.

Market participants are expected to closely monitor global oil prices, developments surrounding a potential US-Iran agreement, and domestic macroeconomic indicators, while intermittent profit-taking may persist following the market's recent record-breaking rally.

OPEN MARKET FOREX RATES

Updated at: 18/6/2026 7:04 AM (PST)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	195.12	199.75
Bahrain Dinar	737.16	747.65
Canadian Dollar	197.97	203.25
China Yuan	38.05	38.80
Danish Krone	43.39	43.79
Euro	323.43	329.46
Hong Kong Dollar	35.10	35.95
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.05
Japanese Yen	1.7264	1.8256
Kuwaiti Dinar	884.59	894.85
Malaysian Ringgit	67.05	67.90
NewZealand $	160.69	164.65
Norwegians Krone	27.88	28.18
Omani Riyal	722	732.45
Qatari Riyal	75.05	76.20
Saudi Riyal	74.25	75
Singapore Dollar	216.17	220.64
Swedish Korona	30.27	30.57
Swiss Franc	347.50	352.15
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	75.90	76.70
UK Pound Sterling	374.22	378.25
US Dollar	279.00	279.35

INTER BANK RATES

Updated at: 18/6/2026 7:04 AM (PST)

Currency	**Bank Buying TT Clean**	**Bank Selling TT & OD**
Australian Dollar	196.48	196.84
Canadian Dollar	198.73	199.09
China Yuan	41.18	41.25
Danish Krone	43.32	43.30
Euro	323.02	323.60
Hong Kong Dollar	35.52	35.58
Japanese Yen	1.7355	1.7386
Saudi Riyal	74.14	74.27
Singapore Dollar	217.08	217.47
Swedish Korona	29.78	29.83
Swiss Franc	351.26	351.89
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.57
UK Pound Sterling	373.59	374.26
US Dollar	278.20	278.70

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

FOREX.pk offered latest and upto date Gold Rate in Pakistan as per International market for today gold rates in Pakistan you can visit GOLD.pk, We update international market gold rate in every fifteen minutes from authentic sources, Gold rates may be different in every city of Pakistan. Karachi is the main hub of gold market, in Pakistan, Karachi is leading for gold rate, every city follow Karachi Sarafa Bazar Association for gold price, Today gold prices for different cities including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta are also available on Gold.pk. FOREX.pk is not liable or responsible to any transactions made on the basis of above mentioned gold rate.

* 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	