

REGULATORY NEWS

By: ICMA Research and Publications Department

IMF Reaches Staff-Level Agreement on Fourth EFF and Third RSF Reviews for Pakistan

The IMF has reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the fourth EFF and third RSF reviews. Subject to Board approval, Pakistan will receive approximately US$1.21 billion, bringing total programme disbursements to US$5.7 billion. The IMF estimated FY2026 GDP growth at 3.6%, inflation at 10.3% and foreign exchange reserves at US$21.5 billion. Key priorities include fiscal consolidation, tax reforms, social spending, energy-sector reforms, improved SOE governance and climate resilience.

FBR Records 29% Increase in Tax Returns, with Sales Tax and FED Exceeding Targets

FBR collected PKR 4.089 trillion during July-October FY27, registering 6% growth compared to PKR 3.840 trillion in the corresponding period last year. Although overall collections remained PKR 96 billion below the target, sales tax receipts exceeded the target by PKR 76 billion, reaching PKR 1.524 trillion, while Federal Excise Duty (FED) collections achieved the PKR 278 billion target. Income tax and customs duty collections recorded year-on-year growth of 4% and marginal growth, respectively. Encouragingly, tax return filings increased by 28.93% to 7.66 million by October 31, reflecting improved compliance. FBR also issued PKR 265 billion in refunds and rebates, up 28.64% year-on-year.

SBP Prioritizes Women, Farmers and Small Businesses in Inclusive Green Finance Agenda

SBP highlighted Pakistan's commitment to inclusive green finance at a four-day joint learning programme with the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) in Islamabad, which hosted 38 participants from 24 countries. The Governor noted that financial inclusion reached 71% and the gender gap narrowed to 27%, while also citing recent regulatory initiatives like the Pakistan Green Taxonomy.

SBP Launches Mojaloop Accelerator to Strengthen Pakistan's Digital Payments Ecosystem

SBP has launched its Innovation Hub Collaboration Framework under SBP Vision 2028, with the Mojaloop Country Accelerator Program as its first initiative, in partnership with the Mojaloop Foundation. The 16-week programme, running from November 2026 to February 2027, aims to strengthen local expertise in digital payment infrastructure through technical training, expert-led sessions and international knowledge exchange. Designed for payment system implementers, digital financial service providers and payment-hub operators, the initiative seeks to promote fintech innovation, enhance domestic technical capabilities and expand access to digital financial services.

SBP Launches Banking on Equality Policy 2026 to Narrow Gender Gap in Financial Inclusion

SBP's Banking on Equality Policy 2026 aims to expand women's financial inclusion, entrepreneurship and banking representation. The previous policy reduced the gender gap from 39% in 2021 to 29% in 2025 and supported over 17,500 women's recruitment in banks. The new policy promotes women's hiring, digital banking, specialised MSME financing, financial literacy and career growth, targeting a further reduction in the gender gap to 25% by 2028.

FBR Reaffirms Faceless Customs Assessment Reform, Reports 49% Reduction in Clearance Time

FBR has reaffirmed the relocation of the Central Appraising Unit (CAU) to Islamabad, clarifying that only customs assessment will shift, while physical examination and port operations will remain in Karachi. The reform aims to reduce discretionary powers and improve transparency through digital assessments. Customs clearance time has declined from 40.2 to 20.57 hours, with 83% of consignments cleared within 48 hours. Additional measures include backlog clearance, green-channel facilitation and provisional release of consignments under Section 81 of the Customs Act, 1969.

Pakistan Railways to Adopt IFRS for Financial Audit for the First Time

Pakistan Railways will have its FY2025–26 financial statements audited under IFRS for the first time to strengthen transparency, accountability and governance. An internationally reputed audit firm will be selected through PPRA-compliant e-PADS procurement. The initiative is part of broader financial management reforms under the State-Owned Enterprises Act, 2023, aimed at improving financial discipline, internal controls and institutional accountability.