

PTI govt to present fifth budget in KP

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led coalition government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will present its fifth and final budget for financial year 2017-18 today with the development outlay of Rs208 billion envisaging a loan of Rs52.55 billion to meet the pressing financial obligations.

The annual budget having total outlay of over Rs600 billion is likely to be a “cut-and-paste” of the previous budgets as the provincial government is hardly bringing about any groundbreaking projects in its final budgetary plan.

Following in the footsteps of other provinces and the federal government, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has also decided to announce an increase of 10 to 15 percent in the salaries and pensions of the government employees.

The mainstay of the provincial budgetary vision, the Annual Development Programme (ADP), would pitch at Rs208 billion, which also includes Rs82 billion foreign project assistance.

According to the budget document available with The News, the province’s own-resource component of the ADP would be Rs126 billion. The foreign project assistance amounting to Rs82 billion would also include the soft and low mark-up loans of Rs52.55 billion.

The ADP would cover a total of 1,631 projects, including 1,182 ongoing and only 449 new ones. Over 80 percent of the development funds would be allocated for the ongoing projects through which, the government claims, sufficient relief would be provided to the masses.

The loans would be utilised for funding about 74 projects in different sectors including agriculture, education, health, roads and mass transit system in Peshawar. Like all previous development budgets, the incumbent government’s project of the mass transit system in Peshawar is also going to be reflected in its final development initiative.

The “Billion Tree Tsunami Afforestation” would also continue under which 200 million saplings would be grown while 120 million saplings would be distributed to the rural organisations for plantation.

Another ambitious project of the provincial government, Zamoong Kor, would also be replicated as an autonomous institution to cater to the education and other career-management needs of the orphans and street children across the province.

An amount of Rs460 million has been allocated for the Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department project under which Special Education Complexes would be built in Charsadda and Mardan.

The social sector, particularly health and education, would get sufficient focus in the development plan for 2017-18. The provincial government is going to set aside Rs12 billion for 101 projects of the health department that include 75 ongoing schemes for which Rs9.96 billion has been allocated while Rs2.3 billion has been allocated for 26 new healthcare projects.

About 47,000 patients would get free treatment for tuberculosis (TB). The 1,300 cancer patients will also get free treatment. Moreover, the government has also planned to recruit 3,900 lady health workers for better service delivery.

The Insaf Health Card system would be extended to the entire province and about 1.8 million registered families would get Rs30,000 per member at the secondary care level and Rs250,000 per member at the tertiary care level treatment at the government and government-designated hospitals.

The government has set aside Rs14 billion for 77 schemes of the primary and secondary education, while Rs6.3 billion would be spent on 64 projects of the higher education sector.

The overall budget document reflects the bureaucratic vision in resource allocation. Like all previous budgets, this time too there isn't any unique project that could be termed as the PTI-government initiative to herald the much-trumpeted change to positively impact the lives of the people in the province.

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