

Big Data Analysis | Welfare Index

Islamabad Tops Welfare Rankings — Sialkot Ranks 3rd, Ahead of Lahore

Top Districts by Welfare Index (Pakistan)



Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk www.gilanifoundation.com)





(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

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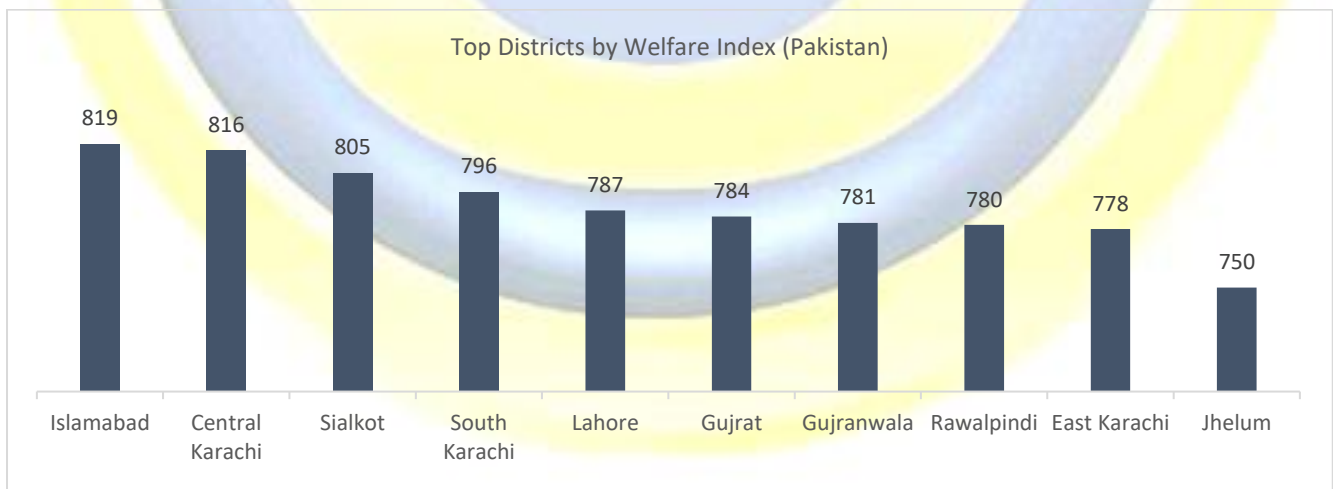
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(Islamabad), 5th May, 2026

A new district-level welfare index developed using Census 2023 data highlights stark differences in living conditions across Pakistan — and reveals some surprising rankings among the country's most well-endowed districts. Analysis from Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics shows that Islamabad ranks highest on the welfare index, followed by Central Karachi, with Sialkot emerging as the third highest-ranked district, notably placing ahead of Lahore, which ranks fifth. The index is constructed using multiple indicators beyond income alone, including education (school attendance and literacy), housing conditions, electricity access, sanitation, and basic household facilities. This broader approach provides a more comprehensive measure of how well districts are delivering quality of life to their residents.

Among the top-performing districts, Sialkot's strong ranking reflects its well-documented industrial base and export-driven economy, which appears to translate into better household-level outcomes. Its position above Lahore — a much larger metropolitan center — suggests that economic productivity at a local level can significantly influence welfare outcomes. Islamabad's position at the top reflects its unique development trajectory. Over just a few decades, it has transformed from a relatively small settlement into a major urban center, with strong performance across nearly all welfare indicators.

At the same time, the rankings highlight a deeper structural concern. The list is dominated by districts from Punjab and major urban centers, with very limited representation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (apart from Abbottabad) and a notable absence of districts from interior Sindh and Balochistan. This pattern underscores a broader reality: Pakistan's development gains remain unevenly distributed across regions. The findings raise an important policy question — how can welfare improvements be extended beyond already well-performing districts to ensure more balanced and inclusive development across the country?



Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com; www.gallup.com.pk; www.gilanifoundation.com)

This analysis was conducted and released by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International. It draws on district-level indicators from the Pakistan Population Census 2023, compiled in Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics' Welfare Index Dashboard. The index aggregates multiple dimensions including education, housing quality, electricity access, sanitation, and basic household facilities to provide a composite measure of welfare across districts.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
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Gilani Research Foundation is a not-for-profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently, Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup Pakistan.

If you have any further questions regarding this poll, please feel free to contact us.

*Best Regards,
Gallup Pakistan*

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