

DEVELOPMENT INSIGHT

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3



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MESSAGE FROM MINISTER

Dear Readers,

I wish you all a very happy new year! Over the past few years, with Chinese cooperation, Pakistan has been able to launch a plethora of development projects including the flagship CPEC project. Work on these projects is in full swing and Pakistan is well on its way to becoming an economic hub in the region. CPEC will not only transform the socioeconomic landscape of Pakistan but will prove to be a regional fate-changer as well. To further consolidate and build on these positive developments, I have declared the year 2017 as the year of productivity, quality and innovation (PQI) to ensure that Pakistan's competitiveness continues to soar in the international market.



I strongly believe that productivity, quality and innovation are the core prerequisites for achieving competitiveness and are the key drivers of economic growth and development. Focus on productivity, quality and innovation can help in addressing socio-economic issues and other global challenges. PML-N government is sincere in its efforts to help foster a sound environment for investment and innovation.

Pakistan Vision 2025 has been designed to nurture a culture of change and transformation through the empowerment of youth. Hence, there is a great need for us to create new opportunities to incorporate youth in the development discourse and in the policymaking processes. Pakistan's untapped potential requires optimism and unrelenting determination. With dedication, resolve and the proper management of our resources, Pakistan can use the guidelines set out in Pakistan Vision 2025 to emerge as an economic power.

PQI would significantly contribute to cleaner, greener and more sustainable growth patterns along with promoting competitiveness in the country. It is essential for us to emphasize the need for synergies among government, academia and the private sector to achieve PQI objectives. With a paradigm shift towards competitiveness across the world, this is the best time to launch productivity, quality and innovation initiatives in Pakistan. Pakistan is now well on track to materialize inclusive and environment friendly economic development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahsan Iqbal'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal
Minister Planning, Development & Reform

INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AT THE MINISTRY

1. MEMBER DEV COMM – DR. ZUBAIR IQBAL GHOURI

Dr. Ghouri is a development strategist, academic and a media professional. He specializes in Policy Planning, Project & Strategic Management spanning over multiple fields of Development Communication, Media and Public Relations, Corporate Relations and Organizational Development. He has been working on issues like peace and conflict, gender and livelihood, and international human rights.

He has previously worked with the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Planning, Newcastle University, NDU and Bahria University Islamabad. He is an alumnus of University of Edinburgh, University of Ulster, University of Punjab and B. Z. University.



2. MEMBER S&T – DR. ATHAR OSAMA

Dr. Osama is a Science and Technology Policy Researcher and Advisor and has written widely on S&T, IT, and Higher Education. He was the lead author of Pakistan's first National Software Industry Study as well as Science and Innovation Landscape. He has previously worked as Science Policy Analyst at RAND Corporation and held the position of Director for Middle East & Asia in ANGLE plc.

Dr. Osama has studied Public Policy from Frederick S. Pardee RAND Graduate School, and is a graduate of Pakistan Airforce Academy, Risalpur in Aeronautical Engineering.



3. MEMBER GOVERNANCE – DR. NABEEL GOHEER

Dr. Goheer has an academic background in engineering, economics, development and management. He has worked in the areas policy planning and reform, and assisted various governments on designing smart systems, reform institutions, rejuvenate markets, and corporatize public sector organizations. Dr. Goheer has been previously affiliated with the Commonwealth Secretariat in London as the Director of Strategic Planning & been Secretary to the Governing Boards. He has studied from Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, International University of Japan, Harvard University and UET, Lahore.



4. MEMBER SOCIAL SECTOR – DR. ASMA HYDER

Dr Asma's research interests focus on wage differentials, schooling, gender, health and wellbeing. Her major contribution in literature is empirical investigation of households' behavior toward labor market decisions and child welfare during climatic and negative economic shocks in developing and poorest societies of the world. Her regional interest includes South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. She is a PhD holder from University of Pennsylvania, USA. Previously, Dr. Asma was serving as an Associate Professor of Labor Economics at IBA, Karachi, has been affiliated with Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, University of California, LSE, UK and Carleton University, Canada.



CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT WORKING PARTY (CDWP)



CDWP clears 7 projects of worth Rs. 6.9 billion

In December 2016, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform hosted two CDWP meetings. The first CDWP meeting approved seven projects worth Rs. 6.9 billion, including one project costing Rs 3.5 billion, which was referred to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC). In addition it approved three position papers and gave concept clearance of two projects. The meeting was chaired by Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, and was attended by senior officers of the provincial governments and ministries concerned.

The CDWP approved provision of equipment for five Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) cancer hospitals of worth Rs. 1.2 billion with FEC 1.1 billion. Minister Ahsan Iqbal directed PAEC officials to fast track work on this project and complete it by March 2018, keeping in view the importance of the said project. The project aims to procure cancer related medical equipment for these five centres, two of which are located in Lahore (CENUM & INMOL) and one each in Karachi (KIRAN), Bahawalpur (BINO) and Islamabad (NORI).

In the higher education sector, CDWP approved upgradation of National Institute of Science and Technical Education (NISTE) Islamabad into a skills University, costing Rs 1 billion with FEC 276 million. Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal directed HEC officials to develop a five year roadmap of the project and stressed on ensuring adequate promotion of vocational and technical education through this University. The CDWP also approved two position papers worth \$14.5 billion and science talent scheme for 1800 young students phase -1 of worth Rs. 1514 million. Furthermore, the CDWP approved construction of an official residence for the speaker of National assembly in Sector F-5/7 Islamabad worth Rs. 112 million with directions to rationalize the cost. It also approved the extension of Intelligence Bureau Academy at H-11/1 Islamabad of worth Rs. 401 million.

Water Resource sector was also discussed at the CDWP. Payment compensation to flood affectees of Mirani dam in 2007 worth Rs. 3.5 billion was also approved. Moreover, the CDWP sanctioned the provision of infrastructure in Quetta's industrial phase-IV, worth Rs. 194 million.

The CDWP agreed on the widening/improvement of road from Ghumanwala to Baigpur in NA-100 district Gujranwala, worth Rs. 492 million. The CDWP gave concept clearance of two projects: vocational school in a public-private partnership project of Rs. 497 million and Pakistan agribusiness and agro-food industry development programme (PAAIAD)-UNIDO, worth Rs. 497 million. It also approved position paper for public sector enterprise reforms project, amounting to Rs. 2.3 billion.

The second CDWP held on the 23rd of December 2016 approved 14 projects worth Rs. 139.5 billion, including five project costing Rs. 131 billion, which were referred to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC). In addition, it approved one position paper and gave concept clearance for one project.

CDWP approved three significant projects of worth Rs. 108 billion related to the areas situated around CPEC alignment to enhance mobility and to ensure socio-economic development. The CDWP referred rehabilitation of NHA highway KKH(N-35) between Thakot-Raikot, worth Rs. 8.5 billion to ECNEC. The project envisages rehabilitation of 136.4 km part of the KKH between Thakot and Raikot which was damaged due to monsoon rains and flash floods in 2010. This project will overlook the construction of breast and retaining walls along with a causeway and culverts. While giving his views regarding the project, Ahsan Iqbal directed authorities to rationalize the cost and review the design of the project.

Another significant project of the western route of CPEC was referred to ECNEC: dualization and improvement of the existing N-50 that passes through Yarak-Sagu-Zhobalong with constructing a bypass at Zhob, total worth of Rs. 80.8billion. The project envisages the construction of a 210 km, 4 lane highway starting from Yarik on N-55 to Zhob on N-50 via Sagu, Daraban, Mughalkot and Manikhuwa. The project will help in uplifting the socio-economic status of the disadvantaged areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.



The CDWP also recommended the construction of a 2 lane highway from Basima to Khuzdar, costing Rs. 19.7 billion to ECNEC. The project aims to enhance the mobility of the underdeveloped areas of the Khuzdar district in the Balochistan province. It will play a significant role in the socio-economic development of deprived people of the province.



In addition, within the transport and communication domain, CDWP approved the development and construction of port allied structures in Mullah Band Area, Gwadar, worth Rs. 2650 million.

Moreover, for the energy sector, CDWP recommended and approved enhancement in transformation capacity of the NTDC system by extension and augmentation of existing grid stations, worth Rs. 16.5 billion with FEC Rs. 12 billion. It also sanctioned the conversion of the existing 220 KV substation at Bund road, Kala Shah Kaku, Ravi and Nishatabad to GIS technology of worth Rs 5.7 billion with FEC 3.1 billion referred to ECNEC.

In physical planning and housing sector, CDWP approved Wash projects in Southern districts of KP under RAHA through Pakistan Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA) amounting to Rs. 150 million. It also approved the construction of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) office along the CPEC route, worth Rs 482 million. Also, construction of conference rooms and offices at Prime Minister's House in Islamabad will be costing Rs 298 million.

The CDWP approved renovation and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure of 200 educational institutions under the Prime Minister Education Sector Reforms Program in Islamabad, worth Rs 2.9 billion.

In the information technology sector, CDWP approved umbrella PC-1 for private cloud center FBR and strengthening of FBR's capacity in fiscal research and tax policy analysis worth Rs. 512 million. Minister Ahsan Iqbal suggested developing a mobile application to enable online registration and filing of tax returns. He further recommended that FBR should collaborate with PIDE to enhance research capabilities and capacity building.

For the sector of science and technology, CDWP approved acquisition of land for establishment of King Hamad University of Nursing and Allied Sciences in Islamabad, sponsored by the government of Bahrain worth Rs. 313 million.

The CDWP approved a feasibility study for sustainable development of Mini dam command area in the Potohar region worth Rs. 39 million. It also approved bridging the job market skill gap for general postgraduate degree holders by sanctioning a Rs. 393 million funding.

In addition, CDWP approved position paper of development scheme in the Shangla district worth Rs 300 million and gave concept clearance for the strengthening of early warning system for the Pakistan Meteorological Department worth Rs 19 billion with FEC 14 billion.

ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER



A three days national conference was organized, with different policy streams for academic papers, posters, discussions and addresses by national and international experts. Each stream required an in-depth analysis to decide upon the elements required to be included. The conference aimed to achieve identification, development and integration of elements of national power for Pakistan. It helped introduce a set of recommendations developed by each stream and moderated by a focus group, short-listing of the most important recommendations and finally a strategy to integrate the most important recommendations in shape of a shared vision which are being developed into a comprehensive plan and KPIs for achievement.

Elements of power are in fact the determinants of power. Previously, only the military was a manifestation of power and gradually economic strength evolved into a big player as well. Twenty first century has seen the rise of competition across different sectors and this show of strength has translated into influence and 'soft power', China being the prime example.

Elements of power in Pakistan are interlinked: one element supports the strength of the other. With a strong focus on economic development, Pakistan has managed to consolidate different elements of power to ensure growth and productivity. Sound developments in industrialization, trade and investment in human resources have ensured Pakistan's integration into the global market.

Pakistan's geo-strategic location has opened avenues for regional cooperation. Our government is fully committed in utilizing Pakistan's unique geography and abundance of natural resources in promoting regional connectivity. In this regard, CPEC is the largest foreign direct investment opportunity in Pakistan and is aiding the government to coherently nurture all facets of our national power. Despite the centrifugal trends of our society, CPEC has enough inertia to continue the progress with all the dissenting voices to share common goals of prosperity.

Youth of Pakistan is also considered critical element of national power. Our government is proactively working towards the development and empowerment of the youth. In accordance with this, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform has included the youth in the policymaking process by introducing the Young Development Fellows. The Pak-US knowledge corridors for youth development, through government sponsored foreign education, are also a manifestation of the same.



Furthermore, Pakistan's democratic values are also a source of national power. Membership of the SAARC and the Shanghai Cooperation organization has furthered our stance on international economic collaboration along with peace and security.

All elements of national power have their own importance and we are working to make progress in each domain. With the cooperation of the Pakistani people, we will be able to make Pakistan a robust economy as we have intended in the Vision 2025 document.



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AT MOSCOW

Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Ahsan Iqbal was invited to present a talk at the Ministerial Conference on Transport at Moscow. He stated that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is fully committed to turn around its economy and develop it into a stable and truly progressive country.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal expressed that his presence here is a manifestation of the importance Pakistan attaches to various dimensions of transport and connectivity, particularly the sustainable transport. "In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we are committed to build resilient and modern infrastructure to ensure among others, the provision of sustainable transport systems for all with improved road safety" said by the Minister .

Ahsan Iqbal maintained that Pakistan is located at the intersection of three engines of growth in Asia, South Asia, China and Central Asia, which has three billion of world's population. Regional connectivity is one of the key pillars of Pakistan's vision 2025. We have therefore embarked upon various infrastructure development programs to enhance the regional connectivity, improve efficiency of transport and trade logistics sector.

He said that in collaboration with China, Pakistan has initiated China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. CPEC is not a bilateral project between Pakistan and China but will serve as a fate changer not only for the involved countries but will also have regional impacts, reaching as far as the Middle East and Europe. CPEC will help overcome Pakistan's energy crisis, improve power generation capacity and will fulfill the electricity needs of the country. The government has also undertaken projects for upgrading the transmission and distribution system. Apart from focusing on energy and infrastructure, CPEC will also improve the quality of life through social and economic interventions. It also seeks to establish special economic zones which will create tremendous trade and economic opportunities. This also includes developing an airport at Gwadar and construction of the eastern, western and central alignments which will connect all the provinces. The Federal Minister said that Pakistan is also actively pursuing road and rail connectivity projects under the Central Asia Region Economic Cooperation (CAREC) framework, which aims at integrating Central Asia into a vibrant economic region with global links.

Ahsan Iqbal said that Government of Pakistan is giving the highest priority to sustainable means of transport through sound policies and harmonized standards. Policies and programmes initiated by the government have now started to show positive results. The commuters of three major cities i.e. Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore have appreciated the efforts of the government because of the operationalization of mass transit systems. Similar mass transit systems are being constructed in other cities namely Karachi and Multan. These projects will not only benefit millions of commuters and bring transportation systems of these major cities at par with the developed countries of the world but will also go along way in promoting the sustainable transport means in the country.

He hoped that Ministerial Conference on Transport will come up with positive decisions and pragmatic recommendations for sustainable transport development & connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.



JOINT COOPERATION COMMITTEE (JCC)



A pre-Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting chaired by Minister for Planning Development and Reform (PD&R) Professor Ahsan Iqbal was held at Planning Commission Islamabad and was attended by the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pervaiz Khattak, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz-Ur-Rehman. Sind was represented by the Minister for Transport Nasir Hussain Shah whereas Minister for Industries Punjab Allahuddin, Minister for P&D Azad Jammu Kashmir Dr. Najeeb Naqi Khan represented their respective provinces. Sifullah Chatha, chief secretary Balochistan represented his province. A large number of federal secretaries and provincial secretaries along with senior officials also attended the meeting.

Consensus was reached between the federal and provincial governments to make China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a success for the brighter and prosperous future of the country. The provincial governments have expressed their outright support in a pre-JCC meeting at the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform in Islamabad.

Ahsan Iqbal maintained that inclusion of new projects in CPEC will open doors for new era of development and as a result the project would get momentum. He said that we all should think beyond our personal affiliations and partisan politics and instead work jointly to ensure successful completion of this fate changer project.

Earlier, while apprising the participants, Ahsan Iqbal said that CPEC has grabbed attention of the whole world and this multi-billion project is being discussed and lauded at every forum. Meanwhile, many countries are showing their willingness to join this project. "CPEC has created hopes amongst the friends of Pakistan and it terrified the foes" he added.

He said that after successful implementation of early harvest projects in energy section, construction work is underway on Western route which will be completed according to its stipulated time. He said that a number of projects involving industry cooperation in Gwadar will be started soon after this forthcoming JCC.

The 6th meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee between Pakistan and China was held in Beijing on December 29, chaired by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and Vice Chairman NDRC Xitao Wang. Ministers, senior officials and experts from both countries reviewed progress on the ongoing projects under CPEC framework on this occasion. The Chinese officials appreciated how all Pakistani provinces were now on board to make CPEC a success.



Many new projects were included under CPEC that pushed the total Chinese investment beyond \$50 billion. CPEC's long-term plans, said to conclude by 2030, will be made official on 31st March 2017 through consensus of all stakeholders. Investment in Pakistan will ensure prosperity in industry, tourism and media along with improving socio-economic conditions.

While briefing on the decisions taken by the 6th JCC held on December 29 in China, the minister said to meet the energy demand of Gwadar city, the JCC agreed to start work on 300MW

coal-based power plant at Gwadar city before March 31. "It was also agreed in principle to start work on a water desalination plant and its completion would be interconnected with the power plant as it required a huge amount of electricity for its operations," he said.

The minister said that joint energy working group is meeting in February which will approve two energy projects related to Gilgit-Baltistan. The minister said that the prime minister had directed to start work on two power projects to end energy crisis in the area. Overall, around 5000MW from the CPEC portfolio projects will be added to the national grid by next year.



The minister said that water is one of the biggest problems faced by Baluchistan, therefore it has been decided to add pat feeder canal to the CPEC projects. Chiniot Iron Ore, Kitty Bandar, Gilgit-Chitral-Chakdara Road, Mirpur-Muzafarabad-Mansehra road will also be included in the CPEC related projects.

It was also agreed that to accelerate the development of Gwadar, the project of Gwadar Smart City will be started soon. He said Gwadar city would be built according to the master plan. Agreements to enhance the capacity of Gwadar hospital from 50 to 150 beds were also included.

The meeting also accorded approval to the \$8 billion project of upgrading ML-1 Peshawar-Karachi railway track. Chinese delegation will visit Pakistan during current month to finalise the financing matters of ML-1 Peshawar to Karachi railway project, the minister added.

He said all four provinces had proposed inclusion of two new projects and one industrial zone in the CPEC which were accepted by both sides.

PIDE CONFERENCE

The 32nd AGM and Conference of the PSDE, organized by PIDE, was chaired by Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development, and Reforms. The three-day long Conference was attended by a large number of social scientists, researchers, faculty members from universities across Pakistan, students, policymakers and Government functionaries. The Conference was organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), with the support of Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform. Other sponsors of the AGM/Conference include UNDP, FES, the World Bank, PPAF, OXFAM, IGC, ILO, IUCN, AKRSP, IFPRI, ADB, and ECO-SF.



Professor Ahsan Iqbal, in his concluding remarks, said that policies should be research-based; solutions to the problems should be based on empirical evidence and not on mere judgments. For this to happen, however, the ideas must be discussed in an intellectually open environment. Highlighting the importance of CPEC for Pakistan, the Minister said that the project is not only a game-changer but it could also be a fate-changer if implemented correctly. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of the PSDE/PIDE Conferences and said that key messages from last year's Conference were discussed and benefited in the Planning Commission.

Professor Iqbal, giving the examples of giants like Blackberry and Nokia who lost their places as global leaders, said that Pakistan must adapt to the changing conditions around the world or else we would be left behind. Prof. Iqbal said that CPEC is not just about transportation infrastructure and energy projects, it is a framework that is much broader, holistic, and looks at all the socioeconomic factors of development. Infrastructure and energy are important as they are the current bottlenecks for development. In the last sixty-six years, 16 to 17 thousand megawatts of energy was added to the system but the coming 3 years would see a record addition of 11,000 megawatt in power production. It is the biggest ever investment in the energy sector in Pakistan. He added that it was the SME sector that paid the price of energy shortages as the large sector had alternatives.

The Minister added that under CPEC, China does not look at Pakistan as a market but a country with shared destiny. By sharing their development experience, the Chinese are helping Pakistan to expedite its development process. Commenting on the development of Chabahar by Iran and India, the Minister said that Pakistan is not looking at it as a competition but a development that complements CPEC. He said that CPEC is not just a project of Pakistan but something linking the whole region.

The first panel discussion of the day was on "Socio-Economic Impact of CPEC", which was chaired by Dr. Arshad Zaman. At the session, Dr. Nadeem Javed, Chief Economist for Government of Pakistan, said that CPEC is primarily an energy-driven connectivity project, aiming at reducing energy constraints and improving the fuel mix. Post-July 2017 the gap between demand and supply of energy will end and by July 2018 generation of power is expected to be in surplus due to CPEC. The Chief Economist said that according to projections, CPEC would reduce the number of unemployed labor force by 2.32 million in 2017-18. Expressing his views on the topic, Professor Tariq Amin Khan from Ryerson University, Canada, said that problems in existing social relations require alteration in structure of rural society. He said that it took many decades for the situation to change in Central Punjab but we cannot wait that long to bring social change in Southern Punjab. The situation demands land distribution, learning lessons from history, and imposition of agriculture tax and using the revenues for rural development.

DEVELOPMENT INSIGHT

JANUARY

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON HEALTH ISSUES

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Ahsan Iqbal maintained that Pakistan is located at the intersection of three engines of growth in Asia, South Asia, China and Central Asia, which has three billion of world's population. Regional connectivity is one of the key pillars of Pakistan's vision 2025. We have therefore embarked upon various infrastructure development programs to enhance the regional connectivity, improve efficiency of transport and trade logistics sector.

He said that in collaboration with China, Pakistan has initiated China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. CPEC is not a bilateral project between Pakistan and China but will serve as a fate changer not only for the involved countries but will also have regional impacts, reaching as far as the Middle East and Europe. CPEC will help overcome Pakistan's energy crisis, improve power generation capacity and will fulfill the electricity needs of the country. The government has also undertaken projects for upgrading the transmission and distribution system. Apart from focusing on energy and infrastructure, CPEC will also improve the quality of life through social and economic interventions. It also seeks to establish special economic zones which will create tremendous trade and economic opportunities. This also includes developing an airport at Gwadar and construction of the eastern, western and central alignments which will connect all the provinces. The Federal Minister said that Pakistan is also actively pursuing road and rail connectivity projects under the Central Asia Region Economic Cooperation (CAREC) framework, which aims at integrating Central Asia into a vibrant economic region with global links.

Ahsan Iqbal said that Government of Pakistan is giving the highest priority to sustainable means of transport through sound policies and harmonized standards. Policies and programmes initiated by the government have now started to show positive results. The commuters of three major cities i.e. Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore have appreciated the efforts of the government because of the operationalization of mass transit systems. Similar mass transit systems are being constructed in other cities namely Karachi and Multan. These projects will not only benefit millions of commuters and bring transportation systems of these major cities at par with the developed countries of the world but will also go along way in promoting the sustainable transport means in the country.

He hoped that Ministerial Conference on Transport will come up with positive decisions and pragmatic recommendations for sustainable transport development & connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.

RTC ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



The Roundtable Conference titled “Promoting Scientific Education and Research in Pakistan” was held at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform on 3rd January 2017 and was chaired by Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal. The RTC was also attended by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, many scientists, professors from various universities and government officials.

Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal claimed that knowledge and technology are pivotal for advancement of our human civilization. The other participants of the conference highlighted various options to promote science education and research in Pakistan. They emphasized to revise the science curriculum, science teacher's training, developing computer and science labs in primary and high schools, conducting science fairs and competitions for students. Ahsan Iqbal mentioned other government efforts which include ‘National Curriculum Reforms’ and ‘Teacher Transformational Training’ initiatives for bringing radical changes in the education sector.

Mr. Ahsan Iqbal affirmed that Pakistan needs a strong knowledge foundation to become an Asian tiger. He said that Pakistan needs to keep pace with the modern world by re-aligning its educational structure and bringing in dynamism in knowledge and introducing multi-disciplinary subjects. The focus from STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] subjects has now been shifted to STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics] subjects, he added. He considers arts an important subject to bring about innovation and creativity. He further added that there is a need for developing ‘questioning minds’ which can only be done if the education system promotes a culture of inquiry among children. “We are still in a battle of English and Urdu medium education system which is leading us to produce cram factories instead of critical thinkers. People in the world progress and then learn English but in Pakistan, we prefer to learn English over progress” said the minister.

Mr. Ahsan Iqbal said that U.S. Pakistan Education, Science and Technology working group provides a platform to strengthen cooperation under the U.S-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, focused on advancing academic networks,

partnerships, and exchanges in higher education, science and technology. He maintained that 10000 Pakistani scholars will be sent to the United States for studies in the next 10 years under the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor. He said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project is an economic game changer, while the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor will become a knowledge game changer. Furthermore, he informed that the number of PhDs has remarkably increased to 7500 now, however HEC aims to build 40 per cent PhD faculty in universities by 2025. He maintained that policy steps being taken to increase graduates in science and mathematics by doubling HEC budget in last three years. Minister also urged scientists to inspire young students to be creative by popularizing science and technology.



Minister said that universities should be linked with needs of local communities with a focus on community service and development. The higher education institutions must have responsibility to improve fundamental purposeful instruction, quality research, and innovation, strengthen linkages with industry, turn into agents of change, embed technology, and produce entrepreneurial leaders, headed.

He observed that every activity revolves around knowledge in the current knowledge revolution era which necessitates a paradigm shift in the learning models of Pakistan. It is unavoidable for every task to revolve around knowledge in order to ensure human progress. "If the speed of change outside is more than the speed of change inside then the end is near," he maintained.

CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT WORKING PARTY (CDWP)



The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved various significant projects to transmit electricity from the power plants to the national grid for transfer to upcountry load centres. Overall, the CDWP approved 18 projects of worth Rs154 billion, including seven project costing Rs 134 billion, which were referred to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC). In addition, it approved two position papers. The meeting was chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and was attended by senior officers of the provincial governments and ministries concerned.

For the energy sector, CDWP approved and referred two projects. First, the evacuation of power from 2 x1100 MW K-2/K-3 coastal power plants near Karachi worth Rs 5.6 billion with FEC Rs 2.6 billion was sanctioned. Second, the evacuation of power from 2 x 660 MW Thar coal based SSRL/SECL power plant at Thar worth Rs 23 billion with FEC Rs 12 billion was referred to ECNEC. It also approved evacuation of power from 350 MW Siddiqsons energy coal fired power plant near Port Qasim worth Rs 2.9 billion with FEC Rs 1.4 billion. The three projects aim to transmit power from the power plants and transfer it to the national grid.

The CDWP approved rehabilitation of damaged 66 KV grid station at Ghiljo Orakzai Agency costing Rs 145 million along with the construction of 132 KV SDT transmission line for making interconnecting arrangement between 132 KV grid station Kharan& Mall grid (82 KM) worth Rs 650 million. It referred the 500 KV Chakwal substation project, worth Rs 7 billion with FEC Rs 3.8 billion, to ECNEC. The CDWP also gave clearance and referred revised Koto hydropower project located in Lower Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ECNEC worth Rs 14 billion with FEC Rs 7 billion.

In transport and communication sector, CDWP approved the revised project of improvement and construction of Jalkhad-Chilas road project worth Rs 7.8 billion, feasibility studies of up-gradation of existing railway line from Rohri to Koti- Taftan via Quetta including the realignment of Sibi-Spezand Section (1022 kms) and feasibility study of rail link from Quetta to Kotla Jam (538 Kms) (updating of existing feasibility study) worth Rs 292 million. This project would help to connect Quetta to Peshawar through railway.

The CDWP approved Saaf Suthro Sindh (SSS) Programme - scaling up of rural sanitation worth Rs 1.5 billion in principle. While giving his observations, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal claimed that the project needed restructuring to ensure solid outcomes and deliverables. The CDWP approved Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Improvement (PIPIP) worth Rs 80 Billion with FEC Rs 48 billion. Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal stressed the need to partner with agricultural university for research and innovation purposes.

In Information Technology, CDWP approved provision of seamless GSM Coverage along KKH in support of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and up-gradation of GSM Network for Gilgit Baltistan Phase-II worth Rs 3.3 billion.

The CDWP approved institutional strengthening & efficiency enhancement of Planning Commission worth Rs 200 million. It gave clearance to two projects in principle which includes Pakistan Programme - revival of wildlife resources in Pakistan worth Rs 1.1 billion and Zoological survey of Pakistan worth Rs 99 million. The chair observed to review and rationalize the cost of the project .

In addition, CDWP also approved 2 position papers which includes construction of 100 dams in Tehsil Dubandal, Gulistan, Killa Abdullah and Chaman area in Killa Abdullah worth Rs 1.5 billion and Pehur high level canal extension district Swabi worth Rs 10 billion.



POST JOINT COOPERATION COMMITTEE (JCC)



Expressing their full support to China Pakistan Economic Corridor, federal and provincial governments have agreed to complete homework on new projects approved by 6th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) to ensure its speedy and timely implementation.

The decision was taken in a post 6th Joint Cooperation Committee meeting presided by Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform (PD&R) here at Planning Commission on 19th January.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Raja Farooq Haidar Khan, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pervaiz Khattak, Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafeez Ur Rehman and provincial ministers from Sindh and Punjab. Senior officials from federal and provincial government were also present in the meeting.

In a joint press conference, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, while highlighting decisions taken in the meeting, told that leadership has agreed to complete homework on new projects included in CPEC during 6th JCC in order to avoid any delay. He informed that Pakistani sides of the Joint Working Groups (JWGs) will meet soon to finalize new projects in energy, infrastructure and other sectors. On this occasion, he appreciated the role of provinces particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on accelerating work on CPEC projects.

Ahsan Iqbal further told that participants agreed that along with projects in infrastructure and energy sector, procedure on Industrialization would be firmed up to ensure maximum benefits of CPEC. Federal Minister further urged on private entrepreneurs to come forward and fully utilize this opportunity to make Pakistan, a prosperous country.

Ahsan Iqbal said that participation of senior provincial leadership at 6th JCC, held last month in Beijing was evidence of provincial support to this billion dollars project. "This participation helped in inclusion of new projects in CPEC portfolio, thus increasing its outlay up to 50 Billion dollars".

Minister PD&R, further appreciating role of Pakistani officials, told that with the hard work and commitment, a number of projects have been completed before its stipulated time.

Minister said that certain circles are engaged in negative propaganda against Pak-China industrial cooperation but these conspirators will have to see failure for sure. He informed that Chinese leadership wishes to speed up the process of industrialization in Pakistan, thus ready to shift industries here due to expensive labor in China.

He said that with initiation of projects in different sectors, construction material industry has witnessed a boom and now thousands of Pakistani engineers and workers have got jobs in CPEC projects.

Ahsan Iqbal further reiterated his stance, saying that CPEC is the most transparent projects in Pakistan and questions on its transparency is a baseless practice. "All the projects in energy sector or operating in independent power producing mode (IPP) where tariff is determined by NEPRA, an independent body, so there is no room for questions" he remarked.



Besides, the leadership agreed to jointly work against the conspirators. On this occasion, Chief Minister KP said that all his reservations have been addressed; therefore, his government is busy to maximize benefits of CPEC. He informed that his government would organize a road show in the month of March at China to attract investment for agriculture, mining and tourism sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES (PIA)



Federal Minister for Planning and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal has said that 2017 will be the year of the restoration of the PIA. He directed PIA's senior management to develop a comprehensive two-year plan for its restoration by 26 January. Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting on special committee formed by ECC to supervise reforms of PIA. Meeting was attended by Minister Ahsan Iqbal, SAPM Haroon and Tariq Bajwa. Secretary Civil Aviation Authority presented before the Committee.

Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal said a clear and shared vision, strict adherence to merit, focus on human resource development, accountability, focus on core functions and customer service are essential elements required to make PIA a world class Airline. He said it is the last chance for employees and management to fix and turn around PIA. The airline has the fundamentals yet it is running at a loss due to poor management and politicization of the organization. We require a clear road map and an effective business model for PIA to succeed. Accountability at all levels should be ensured and performance measures should be put in place.

Federal Minister said that a comprehensive two year plan should be designed. The initial plans should be shared by the senior management by 26th January for the Prime Minister's approval. Ahsan Iqbal further stressed upon PIA's management to be run like a private entity to minimize losses. Customers should be enticed by better quality of service, airline's punctuality and reliability.

