

DEVELOPMENT INSIGHT

May, 2024



*Thriving for
Sustainable
Growth*

Ministry of Planning, Development
& Special Initiatives

[f](#) [@](#) [x](#) [v](#) [in](#) plancompakistan

Content List

- 01 Another Feather in the Cap
- 02 Pakistan 3 Trillion Economy by 2047
- 03 Ensuring Digital Access as a Fundamental Right
- 04 Pakistan-UK Knowledge Corridor
- 05 Narowal Sports City South Asian Games
- 06 2025-South Asian Games in Pakistan
- 07 Review of Chinese Investment Projects
- 08 Emphasis on Business-to-Business Partnerships
- 09 A New Era of Cooperation Ushers In

CONTENT LIST

Another Feather in the Cap



Minister for Planning, **Ahsan Iqbal** Spearheaded:

- Vision 2010
- Outlook 2035
- Vision 2025
- 5Es framework

Ahsan Iqbal's Central Role in:

- China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)
- National Centres for Excellences
- Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway project
- Karachi Circular Railway (KCR)

Ahsan Iqbal to Receive Prestigious APO Award

Federal Minister for Planning, Professor Ahsan Iqbal to formally receive the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Meritorious and Distinguished Award 2024, on 28–30 May 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The APO is a regional intergovernmental organization dedicated to improving productivity in the Asia-Pacific region through mutual cooperation.

This award is recognition of his outstanding contributions to the promotion and improvement of productivity. Professor Ahsan Iqbal is one of the recipients in Asia Pacific who is the winner among others.

A legacy of Excellence

In past, such other distinguishing awards that have been conferred to Ahsan Iqbal in recognition of his exemplary contributions are:

- UNDP's "Champion Minister" for the Asia Pacific region
- Hero of the China - Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by the Chinese Government
- Title of Mr. CPEC by the Government of China.

Sharing the Honour

Along with Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal, some of the other awardees will be:

- Dr. Pao-Cheng Chang - President of the China Productivity Center
- Anilkumar Manibhai Naik- Chairman Emeritus of Larsen & Toubro Limited
- Dr. Bountheung Douangsavanh - Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Lao PDR
- Dr. Ha Minh Hiep - Director General of the Directorate for Standards, Metrology, and Quality in Vietnam
- Yamaaranz Erkhembayar- Chairman and CEO of the Mongolian Productivity Organization

“Public-Private Partnership: Integral to make Pakistan Rs. 3 Trillion Economy by 2047”

PPPs: Key to Rs. 3 Trillion Economy by 2047”

With quite an achievable and sustainable growth rate of 9%, Pakistan is poised to achieve a Rs. 3 trillion economy by 2047.

Major Avenues to be explored

Ahsan Iqbal has shed light on the major avenues and current streams of opportunities that involve:

- Investment commitments from China and Saudi Arabia
- Enhancing landscape, under the umbrella of Saudi Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC)
- Leveraging productivity enhancements
- Making Pakistan an attractive destination for global industries



Positive Synergy

Minister Ahsan Iqbal, spoke at the “Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit 2024”. Ahsan Iqbal accentuated the inevitable role of collaboration between public and private sector. To create a positive synergy in this imperativeness, some of the major catalyst that Ahsan Iqbal advocated involve:

- Developing an optimized and comprehensive ecosystem within business cluster
- Enhancing business competitiveness on a global scale
- Need for trading houses to facilitate the global market integration of local products.
- Need of transition from a domestic market focus to an export-oriented economy.
- Pivotal role of competitiveness and productivity in driving wealth creation

- Need for a progressive mindset to achieve the country's economic goals.

Facilitating Businesses

Ahsan Iqbal also discussed what government will do to facilitate conducive business environment:

- Reducing regulatory burdens on the private sector
- Streamlining regulatory procedures to eliminate obstacles hindering entrepreneurial aspirations.

enhance the investment landscape, citing the Saudi Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a promising platform for promoting Pakistan's attractiveness as a business-friendly destination.



Pakistan Goes Digital: Ensuring Digital Access as a Fundamental Right

Ensuring Digital Access as a Fundamental Right

Digital revolution is a reality and shaping societies. Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal stressed the pivotal role of digitalization in shaping Pakistan's future, emphasizing the proactive engagement of the country's youth

in driving digital innovation.

An important activity that was presided over by Ahsan Iqbal was the launch ceremony of the report titled "Going Digital for Development,"



Establishment of National Centers of Excellence for in universities nationwide, encompassing dimensions of

- a. Big Data
- b. Cloud Computing
- c. Artificial Intelligence
- d. Cybersecurity

Ahsan Iqbal brought to light that the government has the responsibility to bridge the digital divide across all regions, as it aligns with the transformative potential of digital economy which sheds light on critical aspects of development, including digital inclusion.

UNDP report of 2023-24 also highlighted the government's commitment to leveraging its insights for national development.

Pakistan stands as the fourth-largest contributor to the global digital freelancing industry.

Some past key milestones identified by Minister Planning, to boost Pakistan's digital development journey.

- Deregulation of the telecommunications industry in 1993
- Introduction of 3G/4G licenses in 2013
- Pakistan's first digital policy in 2021

Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the need of opting a pro-active strategy that will be for embracing and anticipating digital transformation, rather than succumbing to it, by opting for a reactive strategy.

Bridging the digital divide for digital inclusion



Pakistan-UK Knowledge Corridor

Major Ecosystem of Innovation in Higher Education

A significant meeting on the innovation Ecosystem in Higher education attended by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Mr. Steve Smith, the UK Government's International Education Champion, High-ups of British High Commission including James Hampson (County Director Pakistan), and Jo Moir (Director of Development).



This important meeting identified and proposed some key areas of collaboration, which include:

- Enhancing collaboration between educational institutions in both countries.
- Initiating faculty training programs to bolster academic expertise across borders
- Encouraging UK universities to establish campuses in Pakistan
- Harnessing the expertise of Pakistani scholars in UK universities
- Facilitating stronger academia-to- masses connections
- Emphasized the importance of establishing joint research groups
- Need for streamlined regulation; minimizing hurdles for universities and strengthening the link between research institutions and economic growth.

In line of Ahsan Iqbal's vision, Performance Audit Framework has already been introduced in 2023 to improve the quality of higher education in Pakistan. It promotes collaboration, quality enhancement, and academic integrity.



**20,000 Pakistani students
in the UK Universities**

**8,000 students pursuing
degree programs
in Pakistan supported
by the British government**

Efforts are underway to categorize Pakistan's Universities in Champions League and the National League.

Race Against Time: Opening of Narowal Sports City in 2025

To review administrative matters of Narowal Sports City, Minister for Planning chaired a meeting, with other attendees including Prof. Dr. Muhammad Younis (VC University of Narowal), Nadeem Irshad Kayani (Secretary for Inter Provincial Coordination), Zahoor Ahmed (DG Pakistan Sports Board), Syed Hasan Raza (DC Narowal), and Farooq Azam (Focal Person Narowal Sports City).

To manage administrative affairs, after handing over of Narowal Sports City to University of Narowal, a three-member committee comprising representatives of Vice Chancellor University of Narowal, Higher Education Commission, and Pakistan Sports Board and was formed.

Three-member committee will ensure

- Preparations according to international standards

- Opening of Narowal Sports City for all sports at the earliest
- Speedy completion of the ongoing projects
- Ensure the payment of these projects

Key instructions for the execution body include:

- Complete the restoration work of all grounds, halls and hostels of Narowal Sports City
- Build a Kabaddi ground in Sports City
- Rebuilding of Cricket ground to hold first class cricket matches

**Pakistan will host
South Asian Games
of 2025**



Review of Chinese Investment Projects

Conducive business environment and facilitating the investors is fundamentally important. In line of this, Federal Minister for Planning Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired first Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects (CCoCIP).

Some of the majorly emphasized areas were:

- Strategies to ensure the security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan
- Security measures for Chinese to harness confidence, not the fear.
- Deliberation on the overdue issues of Chinese Independent Power Producers (IPPs)
- Instructions for IPPs to submit their due amounts in the context of CPEC energy projects.
- Providing electricity to SEZs at an incentivized cost
- Conducting a comparative study on the modus operandi of SEZs in regional countries.
- Exploring possibilities for the creation of export processing zones



Five corridors Identified for future collaboration with China

Corridor of Economic Development

Corridor of Job Creation

Corridor of Innovation

Corridor of Green Energy

Corridor of Inclusive Regional Development

Meeting also deliberated on the potential areas of enhanced cooperation with China in upcoming Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC). Joint Working Groups (JWGs) will finalize projects for JCC meeting. Federal government and JWGs will ensure major focus on the national agenda.

2nd Phase of CPEC: Emphasis on Business-to-Business Partnerships

To explore opportunities for enhanced bilateral cooperation and mutual growth, 35 Chinese enterprises and Pakistani business houses were invited by Minister for Planning.

Some of the key decision to facilitate Chinese investors:

- Regular meetings every two months to address pending issues promptly
- Facilitating conducive business environments throughout the country for Chinese Investors
- Federal Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) to establish a specialized quality control mechanism to verify the credibility of Pakistani businesses for potential Chinese partners.
- Unwavering commitment to safeguarding Chinese interests

Business-to-business partnership in CPEC 2nd phase

For the Pakistani investors, some of the major points that were highlighted

Opportunity for Pakistani businesses to integrate into China's global supply chain

To explore and tap into the vast opportunities offered by the Chinese market

Great potential for Pakistan to boost exports to China that stand at a modest \$3 billion.



Chinese Investors are the "HEROES OF PAKISTAN"





2025-South Asian Games in Pakistan

Professor Ahsan Iqbal has taken up the uphill task of South Asian games of 2025, that will be held in Pakistan. Narowal Sports City will host many of those games. In this regard, Ahsan Iqbal presided over a high-level meeting, including all major stakeholders.

Narowal sports City will meet all international standards

South Asian games and the global repute of Pakistan are so close to the heart of Planning Minister that he will personally monitor progress on weekly basis.

Regarding the coaching staff, clear directions were issued:

- Coaches will be present at Narowal Sports City throughout the year
- Coaches will provide international standard training



Narowal sports city to host national level and South Asian games

A New Era of Cooperation Ushers In:

Review sessions on preparation of 13th JCC

Ahsan Iqbal Directed to Complete Homework to make Prime Minister Visit to China a great success

Prime Minister of Pakistan will visit China, at the invitation of the top leadership, along with his team, in May 2024. Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal has taken the lead, not just to make this visit successful but most importantly impactful.

This was a high-level meeting where the projects were reviewed at length. Projects were from diverse and important fields like Energy, Bol, IT, Water resource and Communication.

13th JCC will also be held and in that regard, Ahsan Iqbal has directed ministries for a comprehensive agenda and prior preparation.

Minister for planning has reaffirmed his high hopes from this visit and further strengthening of relations between Pakistan and China, not just at the state level but also people to people level.





Development Communication, Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives,
Government of Pakistan.

Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

 PlanComPakistan