



Ministry of Planning
Development &
Special Initiatives
Government of Pakistan



**URAAN
PAKISTAN**
توشا ئیں ہے پرواز ہے کام تیرا

NEWSLETTER

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Pakistan and Japan Strengthen Development Partnership under Uraan Pakista

JICA President Dr. Tanaka Akihiko called on Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal to discuss new avenues of Pakistan-Japan cooperation in infrastructure, human resource development, digital transformation, tourism and sustainable.....

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Reflecting on July's Progress

July 2026 marked a month of sustained progress in translating the vision of URAAN Pakistan into concrete national priorities and development partnerships. Against a backdrop of improving economic stability, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives remained focused on moving Pakistan from recovery towards sustainable, export-led and innovation-driven growth. The month saw GDP growth of 3.7 percent, record remittances of US\$41.6 billion, exports of goods and services reaching US\$40.9 billion, Large Scale Manufacturing growth of 5.8 percent and FBR revenues rising to Rs13 trillion, reinforcing the foundations for the next phase of economic transformation.

Human capital and youth development remained at the heart of this agenda. The launch of the URAAN Pakistan Overseas Pakistanis Summer Scholars Programme brought together 45 young Pakistanis from more than 150 leading international universities, selected from over 2,000 applicants across 54 countries. Alongside this, initiatives on early childhood development, population management, youth skills, education reform and the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund highlighted a growing emphasis on developing the capabilities, knowledge and skills needed for a competitive future workforce.

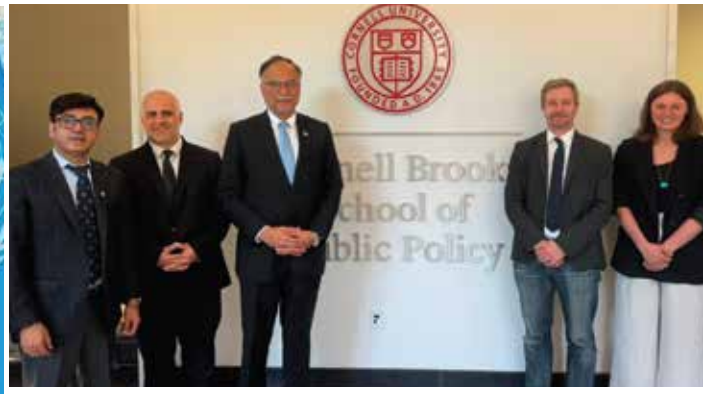
July also witnessed an unprecedented expansion of Pakistan's international development and knowledge partnerships. Engagements across the United States with leading institutions including the University of Illinois Chicago, Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Chicago, Boston University, Cornell University and Harvard Growth Lab opened avenues for cooperation in higher education, artificial intelligence, healthcare, climate research, agriculture, innovation and evidence-based policymaking. Partnerships with Plug and Play Tech Center, NASA and the Cambridge Innovation Center further strengthened Pakistan's ambition to build globally connected innovation ecosystems, support startups and advance emerging technologies, including quantum computing and space sciences.

The month's international engagements extended beyond the United States, with strengthened cooperation with the United Nations, UNDP, Norway, Egypt and Saudi Arabia on sustainable development, climate resilience, human capital, innovation and economic cooperation. Pakistan's participation in the UN High-Level Political Forum reaffirmed its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, while discussions on climate finance and resilient development underscored the importance of international partnerships in addressing Pakistan's vulnerabilities.



Development planning and institutional reform remained equally prominent. The CDWP approved 192 projects and referred 96 to ECNEC, with the approved initiatives expected to generate 289,000 direct and 424,000 indirect jobs and deliver Rs12.6 billion in savings. Progress in logistics, disaster management, digital geospatial planning, public-sector transformation and population policy further demonstrated the Ministry's focus on strengthening the institutions and systems that underpin sustainable development.

Taken together, July reflected a decisive shift from stabilisation towards transformation. From economic recovery and infrastructure planning to youth empowerment, international knowledge partnerships, technological innovation and climate resilience, the month reinforced the central message of URAAN Pakistan: that Pakistan's future growth must be driven not only by investment and infrastructure, but by knowledge, productivity, human capital, innovation and strong institutions. These developments provided a strong foundation for the priorities and initiatives that continued to unfold in August.



FEATURED STORY

From Stabilisation to Transformation: Pakistan's Economy Enters FY2026-27 With Stronger Fiscal And Industrial Indicators



Pakistan has entered FY2026-27 with encouraging signals across inflation, remittances, industrial production, exports, revenue mobilisation and fiscal management. The Government is now positioning macroeconomic stability as the foundation for a broader transformation agenda under URAAN Pakistan, with exports, productivity, human capital and high-impact public investment at its centre.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had moved through a difficult period of economic adjustment and that the stability achieved over recent years had been hard-earned. He emphasised that the next challenge was to convert this stability into sustainable economic transformation, with exports serving as a key driver of employment, incomes and opportunity. Under URAAN Pakistan, the Government is pursuing this transition through a development framework focused on exports, digital transformation, climate and environmental resilience, energy and infrastructure, and equity and empowerment.

The opening months of FY2026-27 have produced several positive indicators. Consumer Price Index inflation eased to 9.2 percent in July 2026, compared with 11.7 percent in May 2026. Workers' remittances reached US\$3.6 billion in July 2026, up 13 percent from US\$3.2 billion in July 2025, following record remittances of US\$41.6 billion during the previous fiscal year. Large-Scale Manufacturing recorded average growth of 5.0 percent in FY2025-26, reversing a 0.7 percent contraction in the preceding year, with 16 of 22 sectors registering positive growth. Automobiles led at 57.8 percent, followed by transport equipment at 42.4 percent, electrical equipment at 14.3 percent, tobacco at 12.6 percent and food at 7.0 percent.

The external sector also began the new fiscal year on a stronger footing. Goods exports rose 9.4 percent to US\$3.0 billion in July 2026, while total exports of goods and services increased 13 percent to US\$3.9 billion. ICT exports reached US\$417 million. Although imports increased 13 percent to US\$7.3 billion, the current account deficit narrowed to US\$328 million from US\$529 million a year earlier.

Fiscal consolidation remained a major achievement. FBR tax collection increased 8.4 percent to Rs. 820.9 billion in July FY2026-27, while the fiscal deficit narrowed to 2.6 percent of GDP in FY2025-26 from 5.4 percent in FY2024-25, the lowest fiscal deficit recorded in two decades. The Government also authorised Rs. 211.327 billion, or 21.1 percent, for priority development projects during July, while CDWP decisions generated Rs. 1.02 billion in savings through the removal of non-essential components. Approved projects were expected to generate approximately 7,851 direct and 14,053 indirect jobs.

For Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, these indicators represent not an endpoint but a platform. With continued fiscal discipline, stronger exports, productive investment, institutional reform and human capital development, the Government aims to transform stabilisation into durable, inclusive economic growth and advance Pakistan towards its long-term ambition of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2035.



SPOTLIGHT STORY

Gilgit-Baltistan Development Agenda Gains Momentum With Focus On Fiscal Reform, Energy And Connectivity

The Government is advancing a comprehensive framework for Gilgit-Baltistan centred on fiscal sustainability, institutional reform, energy security, connectivity and greater utilisation of the region's natural economic potential.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired the Prime Minister's Review Committee on Gilgit-Baltistan, constituted on the directions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to examine the region's key financial, governance and development challenges. The meeting reviewed long-term financial sustainability, hydropower development, power-sector reforms, climate resilience, digital connectivity, public service delivery and development priorities, with the committee tasked to finalise recommendations for submission to the Prime Minister.

A central issue was the creation of a transparent and predictable resource-sharing mechanism based on the principles of the National Finance Commission. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal supported an NFC-based financial framework for Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir and directed the formation of a committee comprising the Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Leader of the Opposition in the GB Assembly, Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan, Attorney General for Pakistan and representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Law & Justice and Inter-Provincial Coordination. The committee is to submit recommendations within a month.

The meeting was informed that federal budgetary support to Gilgit-Baltistan had increased by 87 percent since 2022, while development allocations under PSDP rose from Rs132.851 billion in FY2024-25 to Rs150.4 billion in FY2025-26 and further to Rs157.5 billion in FY2026-27. The longstanding wheat subsidy issue has also been addressed, with federal subsidy support continuing.

Energy security remained a major priority. Work on the Regional Grid Gilgit-Baltistan Phase-I project, approved in FY2023 at Rs9.1 billion, is progressing, while a 100 MWP Distributed Solar Photovoltaic Plants project, initiated in FY2025 at a total cost of Rs. 24.9 Billion, is aimed at addressing power shortages. The Government is also examining stronger links with the National Grid and a regional transmission system.

Recognizing the region's hydropower potential, the Minister directed the Power Division and Ministry of Water Resources to formulate recommendations for accelerating hydropower development through the Public-Private Partnership model. Another committee under the Secretary, Ministry of Planning, will review ongoing development projects, identify implementation bottlenecks and recommend measures for timely completion.

The deliberations reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to sustainable and inclusive development in Gilgit-Baltistan through fiscal reform, infrastructure investment, connectivity, institutional strengthening and private-sector participation.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan And Spain Expand Cooperation Across Education, Agriculture And Human Development



Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal met Ambassador of Spain to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Carlos Aragon in Islamabad to explore stronger bilateral cooperation in higher education, agriculture, sports and human development. The Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to expanding cooperation with Spain across areas of mutual interest and highlighted the country's growing academic engagement with international universities.

A draft MoU has already been shared to establish collaboration between the University of Narowal and a University of Granada, with expected cooperation in academic exchanges, joint research and faculty and student collaboration. The Minister also invited Spanish cooperation in olive cultivation, agribusiness, value addition and agricultural technology in Balochistan, the merged districts of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Potohar, while stressing the need to reduce dependence on imported palm oil. He proposed hosting the next International Conference on Early Childhood Development with Spain and UNICEF and invited the Queen of Spain to attend. Sports cooperation, including technical assistance, coaching exchanges and training programmes for football talent, was also discussed.

79th Independence Day Message Places Youth at Centre of Pakistan's Transformation

On Pakistan's 79th Independence Day and the 150th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary called upon the country's youth to embody the qualities represented by Allama Muhammad Iqbal's Shaheen: ambition, self-reliance, resilience, principle, curiosity and excellence. He stressed that Pakistan's future would be shaped by the talent, confidence, character and determination of its young people.

The Minister said Pakistan required hope, reform, knowledge, innovation and national unity rather than a narrative of despair. He linked this vision directly with URAAN Pakistan, which seeks to build a US\$1 trillion economy through exports, artificial intelligence, the digital economy, research, advanced technology, skilled human capital and sustainable development. He urged young Pakistanis to replace pessimism and complaints with self-belief, integrity, hard work and innovation.



PTV Revamp to Modernise National Broadcasting Infrastructure



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar to discuss the revamping of Pakistan Television under the Public Sector Development Programme. The discussions focused on modernising PTV's broadcasting infrastructure, upgrading its Master Control Rooms and strengthening technical capabilities in line with contemporary broadcasting standards.

The meeting also considered developing local broadcasting infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan to facilitate live coverage of international sporting events. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal described PTV as a national asset that has contributed to Pakistan's identity, unity and positive national narrative, reaffirming the Government's commitment to making the national broadcaster modern, credible and future-ready.

91st CPEC Review Meeting Pushes Five Corridors and Faster Project Implementation

The 91st meeting of the CPEC Projects Review and National Steering Committee, chaired by Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, reviewed progress in infrastructure, power, petroleum, water resources, food and agriculture, Special Economic Zones and preparations for Joint Working Group and 15th JCC meetings. The Minister directed ministries to accelerate implementation of CPEC 2.0 across the Corridors of Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green Development and Regional Connectivity.

Implementation bottlenecks in the Karachi Coastal Comprehensive Development Zone were discussed, with the Government of Sindh, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Board of Investment directed to resolve technical issues with the Chinese company. Progress on training 1,000 agriculture graduates in China was also reviewed, with emphasis on biotechnology, seed development, high-yield crops, digital extension, AI-driven agriculture and cooperative farm management. The Power Supply Stability Project for Gwadar Port and Free Zone was also reviewed. For KKH Phase II, financing was to be discussed in the end-August 2026 working group meeting, with the Minister directing that the 2028 deadline be protected and own-resource construction considered if financing was delayed.



Pakistan and Japan Strengthen Development Partnership under URAAN Pakistan



JICA President Dr. Tanaka Akihiko called on Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal to discuss new avenues of Pakistan-Japan cooperation in infrastructure, human resource development, digital transformation, tourism and sustainable economic growth. The Minister appreciated Japan's longstanding Official Development Assistance and JICA's support in infrastructure, energy, water resources, health, education, agriculture and disaster risk management.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal highlighted improved macroeconomic stability and said government revenues had doubled over the past three years. He outlined URAAN Pakistan's 5Es framework and stressed export-led growth, youth skills and women's economic empowerment. He proposed a Pakistan-Japan Gandhara Tourism Corridor and JICA support for the Productivity, Quality and Innovation initiative with the Japan Productivity Center. Dr. Tanaka reaffirmed Japan's commitment to high-impact cooperation and agreed to a dedicated coordination mechanism involving technical workshops and consultations with JICA headquarters in Tokyo.

Healthcare Education Urged To Embrace Ai, Data Science and Advanced Technology

Addressing the 1st School of Dentistry, SZABMU, International Dental Conference, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal outlined a technology-driven vision for Pakistan's healthcare and dental sector. He said artificial intelligence would transform healthcare more profoundly than the internet transformed communication and called on institutions to integrate AI, data science, engineering, regenerative medicine, advanced materials and 3D printing into education and practice.

The Minister urged universities to become engines of innovation and applied research and called for a National Oral Health Policy to be prepared by the Dental College and Pakistan Association for Dental Research. He encouraged every medical and dental college to provide oral-health awareness and preventive services in government schools. Stronger university-industry collaboration, Made-in-Pakistan dental products and medical and dental tourism were identified as opportunities for exports, investment and employment.



Nationwide Food Quality Survey Ordered After Concerns over Packaged Products

The National Price Monitoring Committee reviewed a laboratory assessment of packaged edible oil, ghee and milk conducted by PCSIR, with findings consolidated by PSQCA. Of 491 samples tested, 315 conformed to prescribed national standards while 176 failed, representing an approximate 36 percent non-conformance rate. The results included 98 failures among 204 Banaspati Ghee samples, 40 among 146 blended cooking oil samples, 26 among 104 packaged liquid milk samples, eight among 18 milk powder samples, three among four refined palm olein samples and one among 13 refined canola oil samples.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal directed provincial governments, regional administrations and regulatory authorities to undertake a comprehensive nationwide survey of loose edible oil, ghee and milk. A technical sub-committee comprising the Ministry of Planning, PCSIR and PSQCA was constituted to provide evidence-based recommendations. The Committee also noted that headline inflation declined to 9.2 percent in July 2026 from 11.1 percent in the previous month, while natural gas, housing, wheat flour, fresh milk and petrol remained upward pressures on prices.



CPEC 2.0 Consultations Shift Focus towards B2B Industrial Cooperation

The CPEC Secretariat hosted a high-level Chinese delegation led by Mr. Sun Dongsheng, Senior Advisor, Economic Affairs Press, for consultations on business-to-business and industrial cooperation under CPEC 2.0. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal highlighted URAAN Pakistan and proposed collaboration with Chinese counterparts of the National Center of New Manufacturing to learn from China's experience in innovation, automation and robotics for Industrial Revolution 4.0 and 5.0.

The Minister said Pakistan's major challenge was its low export base and noted that China imports nearly \$2.6 trillion annually while Pakistan's exports to China stand at only \$3 billion. He said CPEC 2.0 should help overcome the export deficit just as CPEC 1.0 helped address the energy deficit. The Chinese delegation emphasised industrial and agricultural cooperation, productive capacity, SME participation and enterprise-to-enterprise exchanges. The consultations highlighted the transition from infrastructure to industrialisation, connectivity to competitiveness, investment to productivity and government-to-government cooperation towards deeper B2B partnerships.



National Minorities Day Reaffirms Vision of an Inclusive Pakistan



On National Minorities Day, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal reaffirmed the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for an inclusive Pakistan where every citizen, regardless of faith or identity, enjoys equal rights, dignity and opportunity. He described Pakistan's diversity as a source of strength and recognised the enduring contributions of minority communities to the country's social, cultural, economic and national development.

The Minister emphasised that peace and development are inseparable and that tolerance, mutual respect and social harmony create the foundations for education, investment, innovation and sustainable economic growth. The Government reaffirmed its commitment to equal citizenship, equal opportunity and shared responsibility as essential elements of Pakistan's development journey.

Nutrition and Early Childhood Development Placed At Centre of Human Capital Agenda



At a policy dialogue in Islamabad, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for nutrition and early childhood development to become a national priority requiring sustained coordination across all tiers of government. Nearly 40 percent of children in Pakistan are affected by stunted growth, a figure that has remained largely unchanged for over four decades, while 90-95 percent of brain development occurs during the first five years of life.

The Minister stressed that progress requires integrated action across maternal health, WASH and early childhood education. He highlighted governance gaps following the 2010 devolution, under which 17 sectors were transferred to provincial governments without consistently matching authority with capacity, resources and delivery mechanisms at the local level. Under URAAN Pakistan, stunting and ECD have been identified as priority challenges, with proposed measures including a trained early-childhood educator cadre and low-cost community-based tools.

Orakzai Connectivity Project Receives PSDP Support



Members of the Orakzai Jirga met Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal to discuss development needs, particularly road connectivity and infrastructure. The delegation highlighted the 53.4-kilometre Zera-Daboori Road project, approved during the previous PML-N government, as an important intervention for strengthening access to markets, public services and economic opportunities.

Rs. 76.4 million has been allocated under PSDP 2026-27 to complete remaining construction works during the current financial year. The Minister also highlighted a total federal allocation of Rs. 56.076 billion under PSDP 2026-27 for the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Rs. 29 billion for the Merged Districts' Annual Development Programme and Rs. 27 billion under the 10-Year Development Plan.

Five Political Corridors Proposed To Complement CPEC 2.0



PML-N Secretary General and Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said the PML-N and Communist Party of China can build a stronger political and institutional partnership alongside CPEC 2.0. The two sides agreed to develop Five Political Corridors covering political dialogue and strategic coordination; development and governance learning; youth, innovation and future leadership; people-to-people and cultural connectivity; and peace, stability and regional cooperation.

The understanding followed a high-level engagement with Mr. Liu Daxiu of the CPC Party Building Research Institute. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal recalled that CPEC took concrete shape after Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's 2013 China visit and gained decisive momentum following President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan in April 2015. The Chinese side highlighted convergence between China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) and URAAN Pakistan's 5Es framework and endorsed the Five Political Corridors as a political and institutional dimension of CPEC 2.0.

Pharmaceutical Exports Reach 20-Year High As Industry Prepares 2030-And-Beyond Roadmap

Pakistan's pharmaceutical exports reached a 20-year high of \$457 million in FY2025, registering 34 percent growth, as Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for a stronger partnership between Government, industry, academia and research institutions. The pharmaceutical sector recorded PKR 523 billion in FY2025 revenue, up 19.4 percent, and currently has 662 manufacturers in operation.

The Minister called for a one-month industry consultation to identify priorities, barriers and growth potential and develop a roadmap extending to 2030 and beyond. The sector roadmap envisages progress from \$457 million in FY2025 exports to a \$2 billion industry target, followed by \$3 billion through PharmEx within three years and \$10 billion within eight years. Pakistan currently has access to 52 WHO Level 2 markets, while WHO Level 3 status is targeted for April 2027, potentially opening more than 150 markets. Eight Pakistani companies already hold WHO, PIC/S or MHRA approvals, with another 10-15 expected to secure international approvals by 2028.



Automotive Industry Urged To Develop Five-Year Export Plans

The Planning Commission convened a policy dialogue on "Unlocking Pakistan's High-Value Export Potential: Threats and Opportunities for the Automotive Industry" to examine ways to strengthen automotive exports and contribute to the \$63 billion export target under URAAN Pakistan. The session brought together private-sector stakeholders, academics, government officials and international development partners and was jointly chaired by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal described export-led growth as the first and foremost component of URAAN Pakistan and urged the automotive sector to move beyond the domestic market. He called for



modernised industrial clusters, higher productivity, stronger infrastructure, new technologies and an enabling policy environment. Industry stakeholders were asked to formulate five-year export plans identifying sectoral contributions and required government support, while a district-level export development plan was proposed to transform existing capacities into globally competitive export clusters.

Ministry Honours Senior Officers for Public Service



A special farewell ceremony chaired by Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal recognised the contributions of three senior officers of the Ministry of Planning. Mr. Awais Manzoor Somroo, former Secretary, moved to new responsibilities at the Ministry of Climate Change; Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Raja, Joint Chief Economist, retired after a distinguished public-service career; and Mr. Ali Hannan, Joint Secretary (Admin), moved to a new assignment.

Paying tribute to their service, the Minister said competent officers are the real strength of institutions and that their contributions are remembered with respect. He emphasised that the Ministry of Planning remains central to Pakistan's national transformation and that transparency, integrity and commitment to the national interest are core institutional values. He also stressed that public resources are a trust and not a single rupee of the development budget should be allowed to go to waste.

Independence Day Message Links Unity and URAAN Pakistan's Development Vision



On 14 August 2026, the Ministry of Planning marked Independence Day by reaffirming the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and the principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline. The message linked the country's national aspirations with the transformation agenda of URAAN Pakistan and called for renewed confidence in Pakistan's capacity to achieve sustainable growth, innovation and prosperity.

The Ministry urged citizens to replace despair with hope, division with unity and complaints with action. From motorways and energy projects to digital technology and knowledge-based economic development, the message emphasised that national progress depends on building resilience and investing in the future. The country was urged to follow the visionary paths of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam while advancing towards growth, innovation and prosperity.

Maternal Wellbeing and Mental Health Integrated Into Ecd Policy Dialogue



The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan, convened a policy dialogue on maternal wellbeing, including maternal mental health, as a determinant of early childhood development. The engagement reflected the Ministry's prioritisation of mental health within the national development agenda and its recognition of maternal wellbeing as an important component of human development.

Within the 5Es framework, the Equity pillar addresses accessibility, inclusivity and social justice in healthcare delivery and identifies Mental Health and Psychosocial Support as an area requiring attention. The Mental Health Strategic Planning & Coordination Unit is providing technical support to federal and provincial jurisdictions to develop Mental Health & Psychosocial Support services, with particular emphasis on women and vulnerable communities.

Milad-Un-Nabi ﷺ Address Links Faith with Knowledge, Character and Action



Addressing a Milad-un-Nabi ﷺ gathering organised by the Ministry of Planning during Rabi-ul-Awwal, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal reflected on the challenges facing the Muslim world and emphasised the need to reconnect religious devotion with everyday conduct. He observed that Muslims once led global advancement in astronomy, medicine, mathematics and scientific inquiry, while contemporary progress requires renewed commitment to knowledge and intellectual exploration.

The Minister stressed that love for the Prophet ﷺ must translate into obedience, honesty, cleanliness, integrity and action rather than remain a sentiment expressed annually. He argued that national strength is measured by the alignment between beliefs and conduct and concluded with a call for the Ummah to rediscover the discipline, knowledge and moral conduct that once made it a civilisational leader.

One Million Youth to Be Mobilised For Grassroots Development



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is to launch a national youth mobilisation initiative on November 9 under which one million young Pakistanis will be engaged as social mobilisers. Announced by Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at the concluding ceremony of the Overseas Summer Scholar Internship and YPDC Residential Fellowship, the initiative is designed to address persistent social development challenges through community-level action.

With nearly 60 percent of Pakistan's population comprising young people, the initiative will focus on approximately 25 million out-of-school children, literacy and universal primary enrolment, stunting and malnutrition affecting around 40 percent of children, healthy lifestyles, discouraging drug and tobacco use, health and nutrition awareness, plantation drives and positive behavioural change. The Minister said the programme would make young people partners and ambassadors of social change and linked it with Pakistan's ambition to become a \$1 trillion economy by 2035.

Next Generation of Civil Servants Urged To Lead Institutional Transformation



Addressing participants of the 54th Common Training Programme, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called on Pakistan's future civil servants to become transformation agents rather than administrators of the old order. He urged them to challenge the status quo, take initiative, embrace emerging technologies and uphold integrity, accountability and responsibility in public office.

The Minister shared that the Government is developing a SMART Civil Service Reform framework aimed at creating a specialised, meritocratic, inclusive and technology-driven public service. Proposed reforms include replacing the "one exam fits all" model with service-specific examinations, opening senior positions across cadres to competent officers, strengthening performance-based promotions and accountability, and creating a technology-ready civil service. He stressed that the Pakistan of 2047 would require institutions strengthened by ethical and innovative leadership.

Medical Research Urged To Deliver Low-Cost, Locally Relevant Solutions

Addressing the 2nd Annual Ameer-ud-Din Medical College Conference on Research & Education (MCOR'26), Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called on medical researchers to align research and innovation with Pakistan's real healthcare challenges. He urged the development of low-cost diagnostic facilities, precision medicine and AI-enabled healthcare solutions suited to local needs and called for technology to connect specialist expertise with patients in remote areas.

The Minister also encouraged Pakistani institutions to take successful medical innovations to communities across Asia, Africa and other developing regions. Faculty members, he said, should become "builders of scientists" by nurturing curiosity and mentoring young researchers. He called for universities and medical institutions to develop research-driven environments and for MCOR'26 to evolve beyond an annual conference into a sustained movement for research, discovery and innovation.



Food Quality Findings Prompt Stronger National Controls and Quarterly Monitoring

A detailed PCSIR assessment reviewed by the National Price Monitoring Committee found significant quality concerns in packaged Banaspati ghee, edible oils and milk products. Excessive trans-fat levels were found in 26 Banaspati ghee samples, reaching up to 15.87 grams per 100 grams against the PSQCA limit of 2 grams. Excessive peroxide values appeared in 22 ghee samples, elevated free fatty acids in 15 samples and Vitamin A was absent in 46 ghee samples. In blended cooking oil, Vitamin A was absent in 26 samples and excessive peroxide values were found in four, with the highest value at 76.71 against a limit of 10.

The findings varied significantly by province: 79.4 percent of Banaspati ghee samples in Balochistan, 63.3 percent in Sindh, 58.3 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 15.9 percent in Punjab and 5.5 percent in Islamabad Capital Territory failed to meet standards. The Minister directed immediate enforcement, coordination with all four Provincial Food Authorities, quarterly monitoring and inclusion of rural markets. He also directed that violators be held accountable at the manufacturing level and ordered action on disparities between notified and market LPG prices, with the Ministry of Petroleum and OGRA directed to resolve the matter within three days.



Teacher Education Positioned As a Foundation for Knowledge-Based Development

During a visit to the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal emphasised that education is the backbone of national development and that teacher quality is fundamental to preparing a capable generation. He recalled that during 2013-2018, four major projects were assigned to the Ministry of Education covering curriculum, examinations and teacher training and described NIETE as a seed planted by the Ministry of Planning that was developing into a strong institution.

The Minister called for an education system that moves beyond rote and copy-and-paste learning towards creativity, critical thinking, and research and knowledge generation. The current CDWP-level NIETE project, an extension of the original project launched in 2023, is estimated at Rs. 3,407 million and expands the initiative in line with the education emergency declared by the Prime Minister. It is aligned with URAAN Pakistan's Five E's National Economic Transformation Plan and Sustainable Development Goal 4, following a July 2022 National Consultative Meeting on "Revamping Teacher Education in Pakistan".



ML-1 Financing Options Reviewed As Government Seeks Viable Path for Rohri-Multan Section



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired a committee meeting constituted on the Prime Minister's directions to explore financing options for the Rohri-Multan section of ML-1. The meeting examined PSDP, foreign financing, public-private partnership, local commercial bank financing and domestic capital markets as possible sources for completing the project. The estimated cost of the Rohri-Multan section is over Rs450 billion.

The committee was briefed that deteriorated railway infrastructure had contributed to 399 train derailment incidents and 158 accidents during the past ten years. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal directed that a credible independent third party conduct a comprehensive

feasibility study of the Rohri-Multan section to determine its technical, financial and economic viability. He also directed the Ministry of Railways to assess future requirements for locomotives, freight rolling stock and passenger coaches. Work on the Karachi-Rohri section with ADB financing is expected to commence during the current fiscal year.

Harvard Business School Delegation Briefed on Pakistan's Transformation Agenda

Addressing a visiting delegation of Harvard Business School MBA students, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan's central economic challenge was to convert macroeconomic stability into sustained growth, higher productivity, exports, investment and employment. He highlighted Pakistan's population of nearly 260 million, large youth cohort, strategic geography, agricultural and mineral resources, expanding digital economy and global diaspora as foundations for transformation.

The Minister said Pakistan must break the recurring cycle of "boom, external account pressure, stabilisation and slowdown" by restructuring around productivity and exports. He outlined URAAN Pakistan's 5Es and the ambition of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2035, while stressing that development ultimately means building national capabilities. He highlighted Productivity, Quality and Innovation, human capital, AI, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, agriculture and space sciences as strategic opportunities and invited the students to return as investors, entrepreneurs and partners in Pakistan's transformation.



Education Reforms Discussed With Jamea Al-Rasheed Leadership

Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met Mufti Abdul Raheem of Jamia Al-Rasheed in Islamabad to discuss education reforms, curriculum development, and integration of religious and contemporary education, research, youth character-building and national development. The Minister outlined a vision for a modern, inclusive and values-based education system combining contemporary knowledge and practical skills with ethical, intellectual and cultural development.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for modern universities and madaris to be brought onto a common platform, with science, technology, research and knowledge creation developed alongside religious and ethical education. He also advocated expanding research into areas including space, environmental studies, botany and the broader study of the universe, while strengthening students' connection with Pakistan's history, civilisation and intellectual heritage. The meeting also discussed an Endowment Fund proposal by Jamia Al-Rasheed and the importance of English proficiency alongside Urdu and regional languages in knowledge creation and cultural identity.



NEWS IN PICTURES



JICA President Dr. Tanaka Akihiko called on Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal to discuss new avenues of Pakistan-Japan cooperation



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal outlined a technology-driven vision for Pakistan's healthcare and dental sector at 1st School of Dentistry, SZABMU, International Dental Conference.



At a policy dialogue in Islamabad, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for nutrition and early childhood development to become a national priority requiring sustained coordination across all tiers of government.



A special farewell ceremony chaired by Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal recognised the contributions of senior officers of the Ministry of Planning. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Raja, Joint Chief Economist, retired after a distinguished public-service career;



The CPEC Secretariat hosted a high-level Chinese delegation led by Mr. Sun Dongsheng



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and Chief Economist Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed at the celebrations of Pakistan's 79th Independence Day and the 150th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah



NEWS IN PICTURES



A detailed PCSIR assessment reviewed by the National Price Monitoring Committee found significant quality concerns in packaged Banaspati ghee, edible oils and milk products.



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal outlined a technology-driven vision for Pakistan's healthcare and dental sector at 1st School of Dentistry, SZABMU, International Dental Conference.



At a policy dialogue in Islamabad, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for nutrition and early childhood development to become a national priority requiring sustained coordination across all tiers of government.



Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for modern universities and madaris to be brought onto a common platform, with science, technology, research and knowledge creation.



At a policy dialogue in Islamabad, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for nutrition and early childhood development to become a national priority.



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal alongwith Senior officers addressing participants of the 54th Common Training Programme



NEWS IN PICTURES



Prof. Ahsan Iqbal meeting Mr. Liu Daxiu of the CPC Party Building Research Institute.



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal is receiving the souvenir from the Guest.



Pakistani students taking oath at the closing ceremony of Overseas Summer Scholar Internship and YPDC Residential Fellowship



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal in talks with teachers during a visit to the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education





Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives

P Block, Pak Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan



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