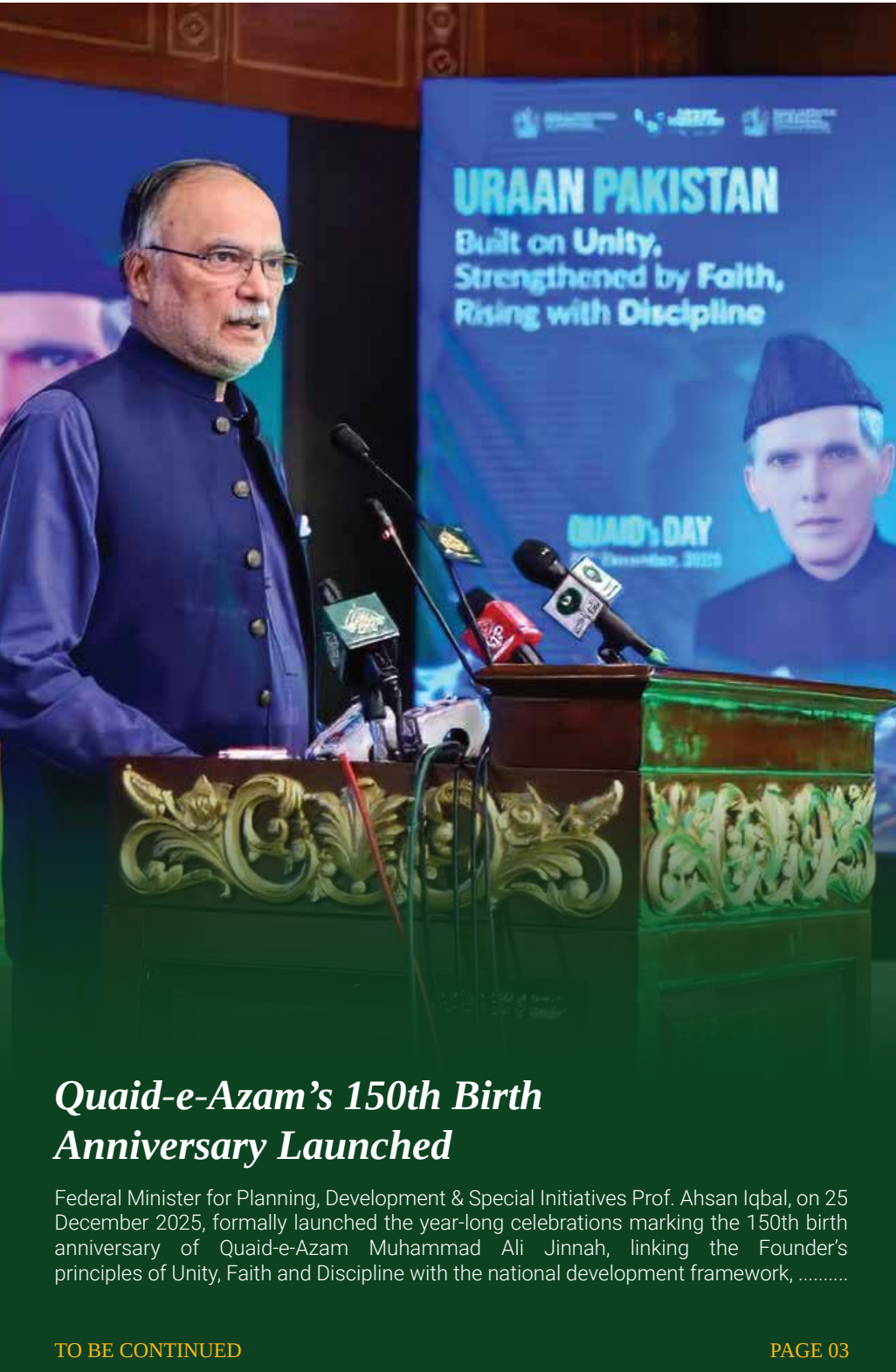




# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

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## Quaid-e-Azam's 150th Birth Anniversary Launched

Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, on 25 December 2025, formally launched the year-long celebrations marking the 150th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, linking the Founder's principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline with the national development framework, .....

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## SPOTLIGHT STORY

Planning Minister Meets Bill Gates, Reaffirms Pakistan's Commitment to a Polio-Free Future



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PAGE 02

# December 2025: Reinforcing Pakistan's Development Direction

December 2025 marked an important phase in Pakistan's development journey as the ministry of planning, development and special initiatives accelerated the shift of uraan pakistan from vision to delivery. The month reinforced progress across connectivity, technology, exports, climate resilience and human capital.

Internationally, Pakistan strengthened its geo-economic positioning at the inaugural tianshan forum in urumqi, where federal minister prof. ahsan iqbal presented Pakistan as a key connectivity hub linking china, central asia, south asia and the middle east. Emphasising a transition from geopolitics to geo-economics, the minister highlighted the role of cpec and gwadar port in regional integration, alongside proposals for trade integration, regional sezs, green energy transition and digital connectivity.

Domestically, December underscored Pakistan's move toward a future-ready economy. At ai rise expo 2025, the government unveiled its national roadmap for artificial intelligence and frontier technologies, announcing new national centres of excellence in quantum computing, nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing under the e-pakistan pillar.

Economic indicators showed growing stability, with gdp growth reaching 3.71 percent in q1 fy2025-26, supported by reforms, fiscal discipline and industrial recovery. Exports remained central to the growth agenda, with increased focus on value-added agriculture and industrial competitiveness.

Infrastructure and energy reviews prioritised rail upgrades, strategic motorways and key water and hydropower projects, while climate resilience and human development were advanced through dewte 2025, the asia energy transition summit and the launch of quaid-e-azam's 150th birth anniversary celebrations. As 2025 concluded, December reflected strategic clarity and steady momentum toward measurable national impact.



# FEATURED STORY

## Pakistan Positions Itself as Eurasia's Connectivity & Geo-Economic Hub at the Tianshan Forum, Urumqi



December witnessed a major diplomatic and geo-economic milestone as Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal represented Pakistan at the inaugural Tianshan Forum on Central Asia Economic Cooperation in Urumqi, China. Addressing ministers, diplomats, scholars, and development partners, the Minister presented Pakistan's vision of shifting from geopolitics to geo-economics, positioning the country as the most efficient connectivity hub linking China, Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and global markets.

Highlighting the historic role of the Silk Road and its modern revival, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal underscored that the broader Eurasian region represents 3.9 billion people with a combined GDP exceeding USD 25 trillion, making it the future centre of global economic gravity. He emphasised that Gwadar Port offers Central Asian states the shortest and most cost-effective access to the sea, reducing maritime access time by up to 70 per cent.

***"Pakistan's location is not just strategic, it is a solution," the Minister stated.***

At the forum, Pakistan proposed a four-pillar cooperation blueprint:

1. Joint Task Force on Connectivity & Trade Integration
2. Regional Special Economic Zones (R-SEZs)
3. Eurasian Energy & Green Transition Partnership
4. Digital Silk Road & Future Skills Alliance

The Minister highlighted CPEC as the flagship of the Belt and Road Initiative, noting its contribution of over 8,000 MW of power generation, development of 1,000+ km of motorways, operationalisation of Gwadar Port, and the foundation it has created for industrial, digital, and energy corridors. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening cooperation under BRI, CAREC, and China's Global Development Initiative, calling connectivity the master key to shared prosperity.

# SPOTLIGHT STORY

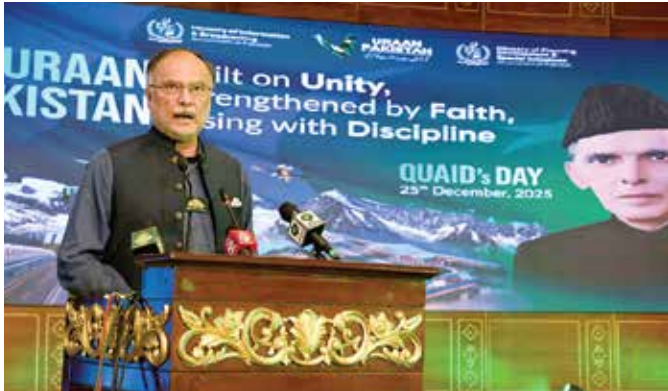
## Planning Minister Meets Bill Gates, Reaffirms Pakistan's Commitment to a Polio-Free Future



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met Mr. Bill Gates, reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to eradicating polio and protecting every child. The Minister welcomed Mr. Gates' USD 1.2 billion pledge to global polio eradication, describing it as visionary leadership at a critical moment, with polio now endemic in only Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Conveying gratitude on behalf of the Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal underscored that polio eradication remains a top national priority, driven by strong political will, frontline health efforts, and global partnerships. He emphasized that with sustained international support and national resolve, Pakistan is determined to make polio a chapter of history.

## Quaid-e-Azam's 150th Birth Anniversary Launched



The year-long celebrations marking the 150th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah were formally launched in Islamabad as Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal called for a renewed national commitment to the principles that gave birth to Pakistan. Speaking at the Jinnah Convention Centre, he described the occasion as a moment of reflection rather than ceremony, urging the nation to rediscover unity, faith and discipline as living values, not slogans. The launch event brought together youth messages, a panel discussion with scholars and policymakers, national performances, and addresses by Ahsan Iqbal and Federal Minister Attaullah Tarar, setting the tone for a year dedicated to remembering, and reclaiming, the Founder's vision.

In his address, Ahsan Iqbal reflected on Quaid-e-Azam's moral courage, constitutional struggle and disciplined leadership, noting that Pakistan was built through vision and character, not chance. He warned that corruption, intolerance, nepotism and disorder, dangers clearly identified by Jinnah, remain key obstacles today. Linking history with the present, he positioned URAAN Pakistan as a practical framework to translate Jinnah's dream into modern governance, built on exports, digital transformation, social equity, climate resilience, and energy and infrastructure development. Addressing the youth, he echoed Jinnah's faith in students as nation-builders, urging them to lead Pakistan's future through knowledge, integrity and innovation. The ceremony concluded with a call for a collective pledge to strengthen institutions, uphold merit and law, empower women and youth, and build a self-reliant, inclusive economy, affirming that honoring Quaid-e-Azam ultimately means shaping the future he envisioned.

## DECEMBER DEVELOPMENT ROUND-UP

### Pakistan's Growth on an Upward Trajectory

Pakistan's economy demonstrated strong early-year momentum, recording a 3.71 % GDP growth in the first quarter of FY 2025-26, a significant qualitative improvement driven by broad-based industrial rebound, resilient agriculture, and prudent fiscal management. This growth was achieved despite the disruptive 2025 flood shock, withdrawal of energy subsidies, and inflationary pressures, reflecting the country's upward economic trend and stabilisation progress under ongoing reform efforts led by the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives.



### 1. EXPORTS: Value Chains, Agriculture & Industrial Competitiveness

The launch of Pakistan's Tea Commercialisation Strategy marked a major export-oriented agricultural intervention in December. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal highlighted that Pakistan currently spends USD 650 million annually on tea imports, despite having over 600,000 hectares suitable for tea cultivation. He emphasised that moving beyond raw production to processing, packaging, branding, and value addition could save foreign exchange and unlock billions in export earnings.

Under URAAN Pakistan, 26 agricultural clusters have been identified to support value-added exports. The Minister also highlighted export potential in dates, mango powder, olive oil, and rose-based products, noting that 1,000 Pakistani agricultural scientists have been trained in China to drive modernisation and productivity gains.

Separately, the Ministry reaffirmed that exports are the central pillar of Pakistan's growth strategy, with the long-term target of raising exports from USD 32 billion to USD 100 billion through eight priority sectors, including manufacturing, IT, services, agriculture, minerals, blue economy, creative industries, and skilled manpower.



## **Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Invited as Chief Guest to IAPEX Lahore 2025**

Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, was invited to serve as Chief Guest at IAPEX Lahore 2025, held at the Expo Centre, Lahore. IAPEX is a flagship international exhibition show - casing innovation across engineering, manufacturing, and industrial technologies, bringing together national and global stakeholders from the industrial and business community.

The Minister's participation reflected the government's emphasis on industrial modernisation, export-led growth, and innovation-driven development under the URAAN Pakistan vision. His engagement with industry leaders underscored the importance of aligning public policy with technological advancement to strengthen Pakistan's productive capacity and global competitiveness.



## **Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Invited as Guest Speaker at National Leadership Workshop**

Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, was invited as a distinguished speaker at the National Leadership Workshop on High Performance Leadership, organised collaboratively by National Defence University (NDU) and CEO Club Pakistan at NDU, Islamabad. The three-day programme, held from 11–13 December 2025, brought together CEOs, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and emerging leaders from across Pakistan to explore leadership in the modern global and economic context, including strategic decision-making, national security perspectives, and inclusive organisational leadership.

The event served as a platform to advance the conversation on "Reimagine Pakistan 2030", focusing on visionary leadership and strategic capacity building essential for national growth. Prof. Iqbal's participation underscored the government's commitment to nurturing high-performance leadership across sectors and aligning leadership discourse with national development goals under the broader URAAN Pakistan vision.



## **2. ENVIRONMENT: Climate Resilience & Disaster Preparedness**

Climate resilience featured prominently in December through the Disaster Early Warning Technology Expo (DEWTE 2025), where Prof. Ahsan Iqbal represented the Prime Minister at the closing ceremony. The Expo showcased AI-powered flood forecasting, satellite-based glacial lake monitoring, drone mapping for disaster-prone areas, and blockchain-secured early warning systems.

The Minister emphasised that under URAAN Pakistan, climate adaptation and disaster preparedness are not sectoral issues but national security and development imperatives. He stressed that technology-driven early warning systems are essential for protecting lives, infrastructure, and economic stability in the face of climate change.



## **3. ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE: PSDP Reviews, Railways, Power & Water Security**

December saw intensive high-level reviews of national infrastructure portfolios. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired meetings reviewing railways, highways, power, hydel energy, and water sector projects under PSDP 2025-26.

### **Key directions included:**

- Groundwork for ML-1 (Karachi–Rohri) to begin in 2026
- Upgradation of 884 km of ML-3
- Fast-tracking the Thar Coal Railway Connectivity Project (Rs 53.7 billion), targeted for completion by June 2026
- Prioritisation of Sukkur–Hyderabad Motorway, Karakoram Highway Phase-II, M-8 Balochistan, and PPP-based motorways



In the power and hydel sector, the Minister reviewed a portfolio exceeding Rs 2.1 trillion, directing ministries to prepare realistic three-year completion and financing plans, prioritise near-completion projects, and reduce throw-forward liabilities. Strategic projects reviewed included Dasu, Diamer-Bhasha, Mohmand Dam, Tarbela 5th Extension, and Karachi's K-IV water project, with Mohmand Dam highlighted for its role in water storage, flood mitigation, irrigation, and energy generation.

Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired a high-level meeting to review critical power projects for Gilgit-Baltistan and Gwadar, reaffirming the government's commitment to reliable and affordable electricity in underserved regions. The Minister reviewed the Rs 24 billion, 100 MWp Distributed Solar Project in Gilgit-Baltistan, comprising 18 MW rooftop and 82 MW utility-scale capacity, targeted to add 100 MW by June 2026, and directed the immediate securing of budgetary allocations for fast-track implementation. The meeting also assessed the Rs 1.9 billion solarisation of pumping stations and desalination plants in Gwadar, a project with a 2.7-year payback period, alongside grid stability measures including deployment of a ±50 MVAR STATCOM at Pasni and a local generation plant by 2026. Prof. Iqbal emphasised that strengthening power infrastructure is essential for sustainable development, improved water supply, and economic activity in both regions.

## Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Delivers Keynote at Asia Energy Transition Summit 2025



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, delivered the keynote address at the Asia Energy Transition Summit 2025, a high-level regional forum bringing together policymakers, energy experts, academics, and development practitioners to advance dialogue on sustainable and inclusive energy pathways.

Opening the Summit, the Minister reiterated Pakistan's focus on reforming its energy outlook and advancing efficiency-led growth under the national development agenda. Emphasising the strategic importance of sustainability, he remarked, "The most reliable source of clean energy is the energy conserved," adding that a modernised and resilient power system remains "indispensable to a green, competitive economy."

Highlighting the interconnected nature of the energy transition, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal called for deeper regional and global collaboration, stressing that no country can transition effectively in isolation. His address reinforced Pakistan's commitment to aligning development planning with climate-smart energy solutions, institutional reform, and long-term economic resilience.

## 4. E-PAKISTAN: Digital Governance, AI & Space Applications

Beyond AI Rise Expo, December also featured the Minister's visit to SUPARCO's Gilgit-Baltistan Space Applications & Research Centre, where he directed the adoption of GIS-based planning, satellite data for agriculture and disaster management, and space education initiatives to inspire youth. The Centre's capabilities in early warning systems, geophysical hazard assessment, and remote connectivity were highlighted as critical for regional development and digital inclusion under E-Pakistan.



### AI Rise Expo 2025: Pakistan Unveils National Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence & Frontier Technologies



In a defining step toward digital transformation under URAAN Pakistan, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal inaugurated AI Rise Expo 2025 in Islamabad. The Expo showcased Pakistan's national roadmap for artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, advanced manufacturing, robotics, drones, space technologies, and the digital economy.

The Minister announced the establishment of three new National Centres of Excellence, in Quantum Computing, Nanotechnology, and New Manufacturing, aimed at strengthening Pakistan's innovation ecosystem and linking universities, industry, and export sectors. He emphasised that frontier technologies will be central to boosting productivity, modernising industry, strengthening exports, and building a future-ready workforce.

Framing the initiative under the E-Pakistan pillar of URAAN Pakistan, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal stated that countries mastering AI and automation will lead the next global economic cycle. He stressed the importance of skills development, university-industry collaboration, and export-oriented technology deployment to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

## 5. EQUITY, ETHICS & EMPOWERMENT: Education, Health & National Identity

### CDWP Meeting & Project Approvals:

This month's meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP), chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, reflected the government's ongoing effort to align public spending with long-term national priorities. Bringing together senior federal and provincial leadership, the forum reviewed eight major development initiatives across education, health, transport, water resources, power and regional development. Four projects amounting to Rs. 10.551 billion were approved at the CDWP level, while four large-scale initiatives worth Rs. 256 billion were recommended to ECNEC, underscoring both the scale of ambition and the need for careful scrutiny at the highest policy level.



Education featured prominently in the discussions. The revised Prime Minister's Pakistan Fund for Education, valued at Rs. 14 billion, was recommended to ECNEC with clear ministerial direction to restore its original spirit: supporting talented but needy students through scholarships and Qarz-e-Hasna in future-critical fields such as IT, AI, science, development economics, water and mining. The Ministry of Education was instructed to resubmit a modified PC-I in line with these priorities. Alongside this, the CDWP approved the construction of a new graduate block at the National College of Arts, Lahore (Rs. 1.607 billion), linking the expansion of creative education with URAAN Pakistan's vision of developing export-oriented creative industries.

In the social sector, two health projects were considered. The expansion of the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology and National Institute of Heart Diseases in Rawalpindi (Rs. 12.948 billion) was recommended to ECNEC, with directions to explore alternative financing sources given fiscal pressures on the PSDP. The revised Punjab Family Planning Program (Rs. 4.282 billion) was approved, with the Minister stressing that devolved social sector responsibilities must translate into measurable outcomes, especially in light of Pakistan's population growth challenges and lagging health indicators.

### ***Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Champions Education at University of Narowal 2nd Convocation***



At the 2nd Convocation of the University of Narowal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, presided as special guest and awarded degrees to over 700 graduating students, including top scholars and medal recipients. He highlighted that education is a central pillar of national development and urged graduates to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan's progress, reinforcing the government's commitment to broadening equitable access to higher education and opportunity across regions.

### ***Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Inaugurates Jamia Masjid at UET Narowal***



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, inaugurated the newly constructed Jamia Masjid at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Narowal, marking an important step toward fostering an inclusive and holistic campus environment. The Minister highlighted the role of educational institutions in nurturing not only academic excellence but also values of harmony, reflection, and unity, reinforcing the government's commitment to equitable and balanced development of public universities across regions.

### ***Investing in Knowledge for an Equitable Pakistan: Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at KEMUCON 2025***

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, addressed the inaugural ceremony of the 45th KEMUCON Annual International Scientific Conference 2025 at King Edward Medical University as the Chief Guest, highlighting education, research, and equity in healthcare as pillars of national development.

In his keynote remarks, the Minister underscored the Quranic principle of Iqra (Read), stressing that inclusive access to quality education, research excellence, and institutional resilience are essential for Pakistan's progress. He emphasised the need to convert brain drain into brain gain and called for sustained reforms, policy continuity, and investment in human capital to build a just and self-reliant economy.



Prof. Ahsan Iqbal appreciated the role of KEMU alumni and global partnerships in strengthening public sector healthcare and expanding opportunities for students through scholarships, research support, and medical infrastructure, reflecting a shared commitment to equity, social uplift, and service to humanity.

### ***Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Invited as Chief Guest to 17ICGE & 8ISG Geotechnical Engineering Conference***

Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, was invited to serve as Chief Guest at the inaugural session of the 17th International Conference on Geotechnical Engineering & 8th International Symposium on Geohazards (17ICGE & 8ISG) held in Lahore from 4–5 December 2025. The marquee conference, organised by the Pakistan Geotechnical Engineering Society in collaboration with international partners, brings together global experts to discuss resilient infrastructure, geo-hazard mitigation, and sustainable engineering practices. The Minister's participation underscored the Government's focus on equitable infrastructural safety and climate resilience, aligning scientific expertise with national development priorities.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

***As Pakistan enters 2026, the Ministry will focus on:***

- Declaring 2026 as the Year of Reform, with actionable reform agendas
- Advancing URAAN Pakistan implementation with exports, technology, infrastructure, and human capital at the core
- Strengthening monitoring, execution, and governance to ensure that every public rupee delivers measurable national impact

# NEWS IN PICTURES



The seventh meeting of the task force established to review the pay scale system in educational institutions was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning, Professor Ahsan Iqbal.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at the International Conference on Space and Technological Applications organized by SUPARCO.



"Saiban-e-Pakistan" was formally launched at Faisal Masjid, Islamabad, in collaboration with the Peace and Development Unit of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Islamic Research Institute, Faisal Masjid and International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI).



Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal, while addressing the National Consultative Meeting 2026 today, declared the year 2026 as the "Year of Reforms".

PIDE's VC Dr. M. Nadeem Javaid speech at a workshop on reforms in higher education





Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal  
Addressing the International Education Conference held at Allama Iqbal Open University,



Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal's address at a conference on "Data-based policymaking and protecting the basic needs of children in Pakistan"



Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met with Ms. Leah Gutierrez, Director General, New Sectors Department 3, Asian Development Bank (ADB), in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met with Sherry Kenson Hall, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and her delegation.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at the launch of the Peace & Development Unit:





**Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives**

P Block, Pak Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan



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