

Pakistan Advances Major Infrastructure and Policy Initiatives

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ISLAMABAD, The National Assembly of Pakistan today received updates on several large-scale federal and provincial projects aimed at improving infrastructure, water storage, and energy development across the country.

Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Mueen Wattoo told lawmakers that the federal government is sponsoring eighteen dam projects with a combined estimated cost of 1,036.069 billion Pakistani rupees. Upon completion, these projects are expected to provide a total storage capacity of approximately 8.23 million acre-feet of water and bring 346,447 acres of new land under irrigation. Among these, the Diamer-Basha Dam is projected to store 6.4 million acre-feet. In addition, provincial governments are sponsoring seventy-seven dam projects at a combined cost of 89.243 billion rupees.

Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi reported on initiatives to restore and expand rail connectivity. Feasibility studies for a rail link connecting Kohat-Thal-Kharlachi with Afghanistan have been completed, with land acquisition underway. Studies for a new rail route from Gwadar to Nokkundi are near completion, and land acquisition for links from Gwadar to Mastung and Besima to Jacobabad is in progress. Pakistan Railways is also upgrading stations and preparing to outsource 200 freight wagons to the private sector to support growing industrial and energy demands.

Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar highlighted the issuance of Pakistan's first private ferry license, allowing operations between Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Gwadar, as well as

international routes to Iran, Iraq, and Abu Dhabi. Officials indicated that additional licenses may be granted in the future.

During the session, PPP leader Aseefa Bhutto Zardari raised concerns about the closure of the Utility Stores Corporation, urging the government to reconsider its decision.

Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz provided updates on offshore and onshore oil and gas exploration. The bidding process for forty offshore blocks, attracting interest from countries including Turkey, China, Kuwait, and the United States, is expected to conclude by the end of October 2025. Thirteen onshore blocks were awarded in April, and twenty-three more are in the process of being allocated. Efforts are ongoing to harness tight and shale oil and gas reserves.

The National Assembly also passed resolutions recognizing Pakistan's Independence Day and the historic victory in Marka-e-Haq, praising the armed forces and security personnel for their role in defending the country. Lawmakers reaffirmed commitments to sovereignty, peace, and friendly relations with neighboring countries, while emphasizing the importance of reducing population growth through improved reproductive health services, particularly in underserved rural areas.

In addition, the assembly passed several key bills, including the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which strengthens legal support for joint law enforcement and intelligence operations against terrorism. The National School of Public Policy (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2025, were also approved before the house was prorogued.

These measures reflect the Pakistani government's continued focus on infrastructure development, energy security, and national policy reforms, aiming to support economic growth and public welfare across the country.