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Punjab Approves Rs 22 Billion Development Push

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The Punjab government has approved nine major development projects worth Rs 22.18 billion, marking a significant step toward infrastructure growth and economic diversification in the province. The decision was taken during the 16th meeting of the Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP), chaired by Planning & Development Board Chairman Dr. Naeem Rauf. The projects, covering aquaculture, renewable energy, and

education, are intended to enhance economic capacity while addressing essential public needs. The most substantial investment Rs 9.94 billion will go toward establishing shrimp farming infrastructure, a move aimed at introducing large-scale aquaculture to a province traditionally focused on wheat and rice cultivation. Alongside this, Rs 2.94 billion has been allocated to convert public colleges to solar energy, and Rs 500 million will fund feasibility studies for expanded shrimp farming operations. An additional Rs 30 million is set aside for assessing the creation of a Punjab Electric Power Regulatory Authority (EPRA), which could potentially give the province greater control over its power sector.



The shrimp farming initiative is particularly notable given Punjab's geographical position as a landlocked region. The project will involve developing aquaculture facilities, training farmers, and establishing supply chains to enable participation in the national and global seafood market. Officials highlight that the project could create thousands of direct and indirect jobs, boost export earnings, and diversify the province's agricultural base. Meanwhile, the solarisation of public colleges is expected to reduce electricity costs for educational institutions and contribute to energy self-sufficiency. This approach has already proven successful in other provinces, aligning with national efforts to increase renewable energy adoption. The proposed EPRA study reflects growing provincial interest in decentralising energy governance, potentially enabling more localised oversight of electricity production, distribution, and pricing.

The approved development package also includes projects aimed at strengthening economic planning and regulatory capabilities. For example, the feasibility studies for shrimp farming and EPRA signal a

willingness to invest in research before committing to full-scale implementation. This measured approach is intended to minimise risks while maximising returns on investment. Energy experts suggest that if EPRA is established, it could streamline decision-making, improve service delivery, and reduce reliance on federal regulatory bodies. Additionally, aquaculture specialists point out that shrimp farming, though new to Punjab, has seen rapid success in coastal provinces and could provide a model for adaptation in non-coastal environments through advanced farming technology.



These investments come at a time when Pakistan is facing broader economic challenges, including fiscal constraints and the need to increase exports. Punjab's decision to focus on projects that combine immediate infrastructure upgrades with potential long-term revenue generation demonstrates a forward-looking approach to governance. By targeting sectors with both domestic and international market potential, the province is positioning itself to enhance competitiveness and economic resilience. Implementation will be closely watched in the coming months, with outcomes likely to influence future development strategies not only in Punjab but across other provinces. If executed effectively, the initiatives particularly shrimp farming and renewable energy conversion could serve as replicable models for sustainable provincial development in Pakistan.