

Message from Reformistan



This photo shows shipping containers stacked on a ship at a seaport in Karachi. — AFP/File

What follows is the inaugural address by Prime Minister Arsh of Reformistan. This speech is entirely hypothetical. Reformistan and Prime Minister Arsh are entirely fictional and bear no relation to real-world events. This speech is a creative exercise for illustrative purposes.

The intent is to inspire constructive dialogue about comprehensive economic models and their potential impact on national development. The speech is based on 'The PIDE Reform Agenda for Accelerated and Sustained Growth' aiming for reform for accelerated prosperity and inclusive development (RAPID):

Fellow citizens of Reformistan, my brothers and sisters! As your newly elected prime minister, I bring to you a vision to transform Reformistan, a vision for sustained growth, equity and prosperity through transformative change.

Imagine! Rather be sure that in the next half-decade, Reformistan will stand tall as a global leader in innovation, technology, and economic prowess. Our cities will be vibrant hubs of opportunity, fostering creativity, inclusivity, and prosperity for every citizen. The education system will be a pillar of excellence, nurturing minds that question, innovate, and lead.

Our governance will be transparent, efficient, and responsive, thus ensuring that the fruit of progress reaches every corner of the nation. The public and private sectors will collaborate seamlessly, creating a dynamic ecosystem that spurs economic growth and job creation. In five years, Reformistan will not just be a country; it will be a model – a model of good governance, sustainability, and social harmony. Let's go a bit deep! Let's get real! Now, I will present not just a vision but a comprehensive blueprint for Reformistan's economic transformation – 'RAPID'.

The core principle of RAPID is rooted in the understanding that our youth, our greatest asset, must find gainful employment, and our economic trajectory must ensure debt sustainability. To achieve this, we do not merely aim for growth, we will ensure it – a growth rate of 7-9 per cent per annum for the next

three decades.

This growth rate is not a mere aspiration, it is our lifeline. But achieving it demands a departure from the current norm, a shift in the way we approach governance, economics, and societal progress. RAPID is our commitment to break away from the shackles of the past and surge into a future where prosperity is not just a dream but a reality.

The success of RAPID hinges on redefining the role of the state. We envisage a government that is not a hindrance but an enabler – an enabler of innovation, investment, and individual enterprise. Our institutions will be the bedrock of progress, reformed to enhance productivity and propel investment.

Markets are the pulse of our economy, and RAPID recognizes the need for vibrant and competitive markets. We will liberate our markets from the burdensome hand of excessive regulation, allowing them to breathe, innovate, and thrive. The result-based management framework will revolutionize public investments, ensuring they catalyze meaningful change.

Our cities are the engines of economic growth, and RAPID seeks to unleash their potential. By rethinking regulations around zoning, construction, and public spaces, we aim to create urban centres that are hubs of innovation, inclusivity, and economic dynamism.

Embracing technology is not an option, it is a necessity. RAPID positions Reformistan at the forefront of technological innovation. We will invest in universal internet access, fostering an environment where creativity and problem-solving skills thrive, propelling us into the future.

To ensure efficiency, we propose a decentralized governance model. Policy formulation, monitoring, and evaluation will be the focus of the federal government, while independent regulatory agencies ensure fair play. Service delivery, vital for our citizens, will be in the capable hands of local governments, close to the people they serve.

RAPID includes comprehensive tax reforms designed to make our tax system more progressive, transparent, and efficient. By curbing tax breaks for the elite and ensuring a buoyant tax regime, we aim to mobilize resources for our collective prosperity.

Macro stability and debt sustainability are non-negotiable. RAPID asserts that sustained growth is the key to overcoming these challenges. While we anticipate hurdles, we commit to adaptability, ensuring our reforms remain aligned with our overarching goal.

In pursuit of a transformative vision for our nation, comprehensive reforms in the education sector are essential. The focus must shift towards quality education, equipping students with both foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary for the complexities of the 21st century. The reform agenda encompasses not only an overhaul of curricula to include modern technical skills but also emphasizes the cultivation of soft skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication.

To reduce poverty and vulnerability, the government shall provide income support to only vulnerable societies. It will design multifaceted graduation programmes to create opportunities for the poor to establish micro-enterprises and engage in productive employment. Pakistan's growth has always been affected by climate-related catastrophic events. A special focus will be given to implementing climate resilience-related action to protect the economy from shocks and secure more sustainable and inclusive growth.

Lastly, we aim to improve the country's standing on the international stage. Reformistan will follow an independent foreign policy to promote international economic relations and trade. Building positive diplomatic relations fostering cooperation with other nations and collaborations with international institutes can contribute to stability and development.

As your prime minister, I pledge unwavering commitment to this transformative journey. I would also like to extend an earnest invitation to all political parties, stakeholders, and citizens to join hands in this

transformative journey for Reformistan.

The challenges we face are not partisan, they are challenges to the very fabric of our nation. In the spirit of unity and shared responsibility, I propose the establishment of a RAPID reform council, a body that transcends political lines and puts the interests of Reformistan first.

I am honoured to extend an invitation to the opposition leader to co-chair this council alongside me. This is not merely a symbolic gesture but a concrete step towards a bipartisan approach in shaping the destiny of our nation. The council will serve as a platform for collaborative decision-making, drawing on the diverse expertise and perspectives of all participants.

RAPID is not just a government initiative, it is a collective mission for the people, by the people. Let us unite to unleash the full economic potential of Reformistan, ensuring prosperity, justice, and sustainable growth for generations to come. Together, we can not only envision a reformed nation but actively participate in its creation.

Thank you and let us embark on this journey of reform with unwavering determination and collective resolve. The next five years will be a testament to our commitment, resilience and shared vision.

Thank you, and may God bless Reformistan.

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