

THE NEWS

AGP's overhaul was missed because of PTI's 'yes, no' to Dr Ishrat's reforms

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Auditor General of Pakistan Islamabad building seen in this image.— [agp.gov.pk/File](#)

ISLAMABAD: A comprehensive package of reforms proposed in 2019 to modernise and strengthen the office of Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) was largely ignored during the government of former prime minister Imran Khan despite official approval and repeated commitments for implementation.

According to official documents, the reforms were proposed by Dr Ishrat Husain, the-then Adviser to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity, in October 2019 with the objective of transforming the Department of Auditor General of Pakistan into an autonomous and professionally modernised institution.

But after Dr Ishrat left the government because of frustration over the-then regime's half-hearted push for set of reforms that the task force under him had recommended, the reforms were generally ignored by all.

Documents available with The News show that the reform package concerning the AGP envisaged granting administrative and financial autonomy to the AGP, introducing advanced audit methodologies, strengthening accountability mechanisms and shifting focus from routine transactional audits to performance-based auditing of public service delivery, infrastructure projects and regulatory performance.

The proposals also called for professionalisation of the audit workforce through strict recruitment standards, continuous professional development, performance-based promotions and incentive systems for outstanding officers. Specialised audit wings for information systems, debt, energy and forensic audits were also proposed.

A major component of the reforms related to digitisation and automation. The plan included establishment of an Audit Management Information System (AMIS), upgradation of SAP/R3 and Financial Accounting and Budgeting System (FABS), creation of a citizen feedback web portal, implementation of e-office systems and introduction of a Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS).

The documents also contained detailed timelines for implementation between 2019 and 2021, including specialised training and certification of officers in information systems and forensic auditing.

The federal cabinet, in its meeting held on January 12, 2021, approved submission of a new law titled “The Auditor General’s (Functions, Powers and Terms and Conditions of Service) Act, 2020” and directed the AGP office to regularly submit progress reports to the Cabinet Committee on Institutional Reforms (CCIR).

However, despite these decisions, most of the proposed structural reforms could not be fully implemented during the PTI government’s tenure. Official records show that while some initiatives such as pilot automation projects and professional development programmes were launched, the broader reform agenda remained incomplete.

Sources said the failure to fully implement the reforms deprived the country’s supreme audit institution of the autonomy, modernisation and technical capacity considered essential for improving transparency, accountability and governance in the public sector.