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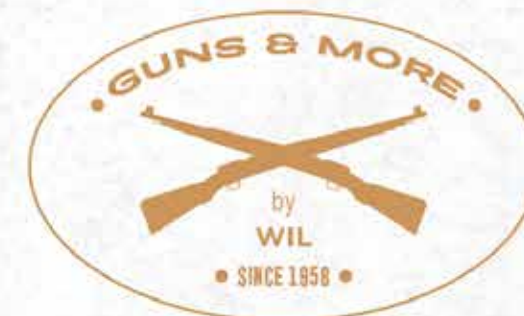
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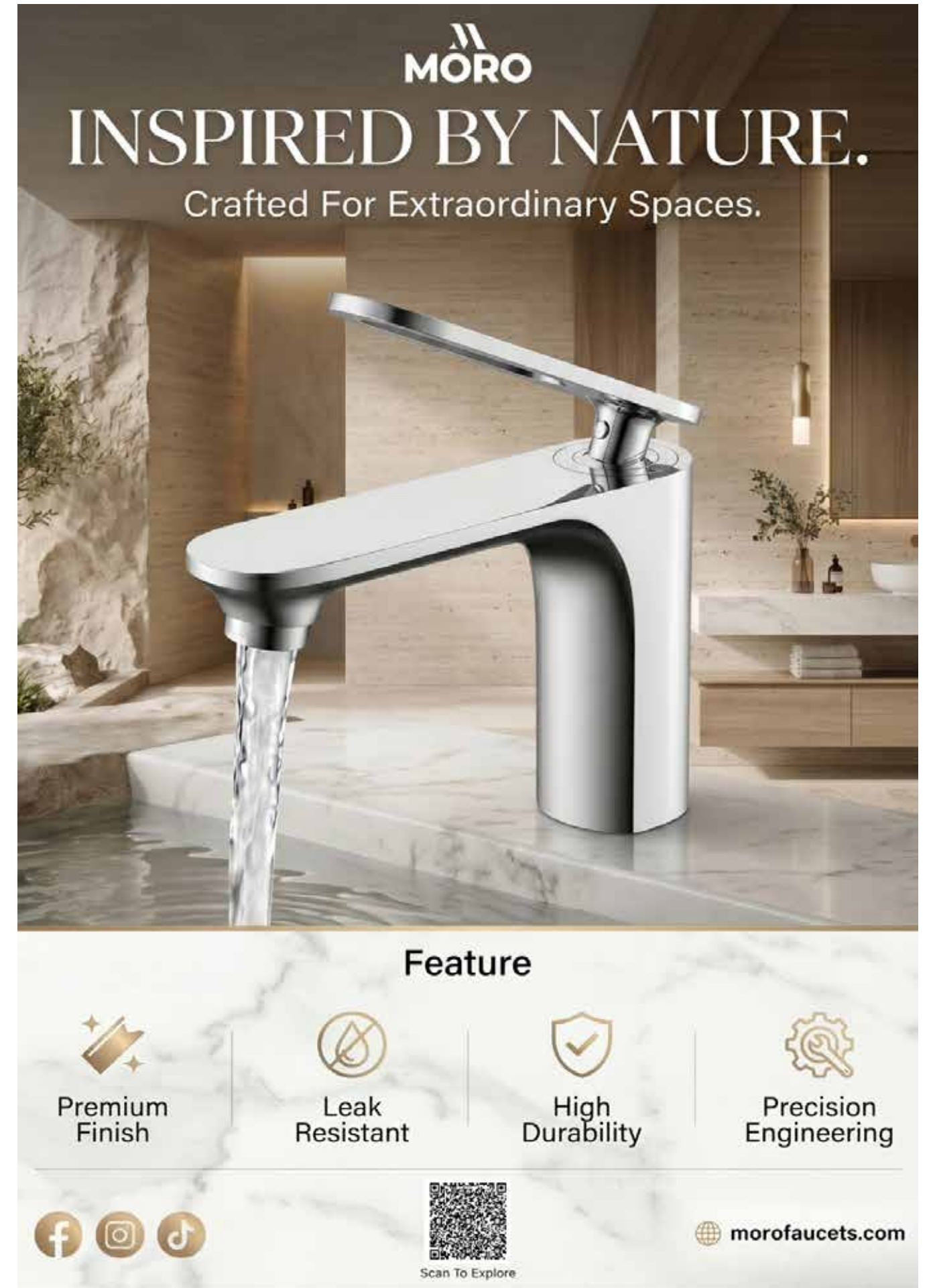
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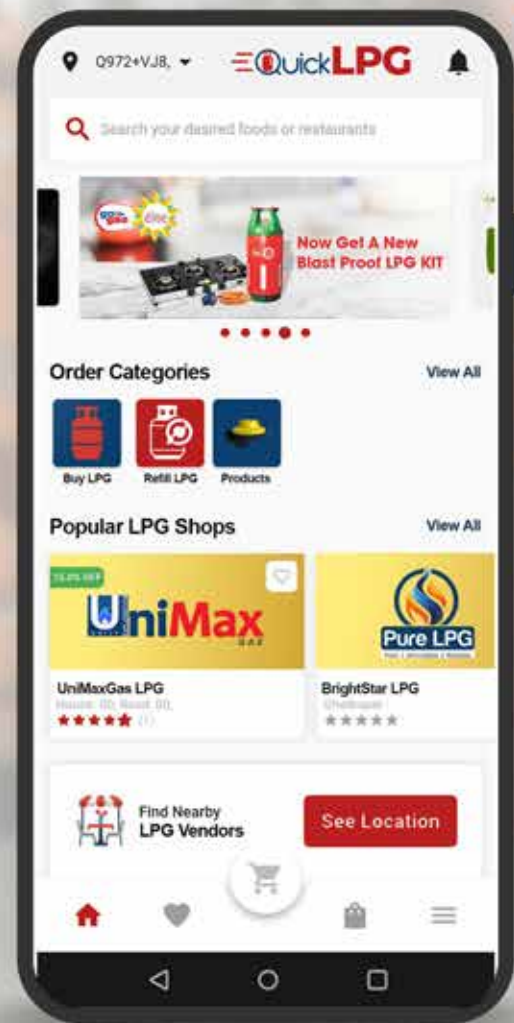
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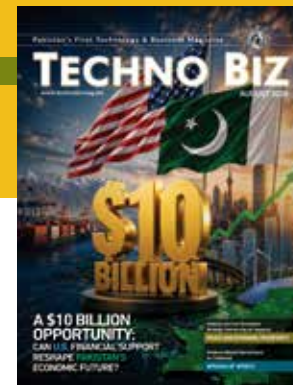
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Published by: **Shahid A. Khan, Global Pakistan, Lahore**
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Printed by: **Hashmees Printers, Lower Mall, Lahore.**

Designed & Produced by: **RAS Advertising**
Lahore-Pakistan. 0333-4609840, 0323-8522360

PRICE **Rs. 750/-**

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EDITORIAL



A Defining Economic Moment for Pakistan

Pakistan stands at a pivotal moment in its economic journey. Reports that the country is seeking a ten billion dollar financial support facility from the United States have generated considerable interest at home and abroad. Whether or not such an arrangement ultimately materializes, the discussion itself reflects an important reality.

Pakistan's economy has entered a phase where international confidence, strategic partnerships, and sustained structural reforms are becoming increasingly interconnected. The opportunity before the nation is not simply about securing financial assistance. It is about building an economy capable of standing on a stronger and more sustainable foundation.

Over the past several years, Pakistan has endured a series of extraordinary economic challenges. High inflation, pressure on foreign exchange reserves, increasing debt obligations, rising energy costs, and global economic uncertainty have tested the resilience of businesses and ordinary citizens alike. Despite these difficulties, recent economic indicators suggest that stabilization efforts are beginning to produce encouraging results. Inflation has eased compared with previous peaks, foreign exchange reserves have shown gradual improvement, exports are recovering, and investor confidence is slowly returning. These developments deserve recognition because they demonstrate that disciplined economic management can deliver positive outcomes.

If a significant financial support facility becomes available, it should not be viewed as a destination but as an opportunity. Financial assistance provides breathing space, but it cannot replace sound economic policies. History has repeatedly shown that countries achieve lasting prosperity not through external borrowing alone, but through productivity, innovation, investment, and institutional strength. Pakistan must therefore use any additional financial resources to accelerate reforms rather than postpone them.

The country's greatest strength lies in its people. With one of the world's youngest populations, a rapidly expanding digital economy, talented entrepreneurs, and growing information technology exports, Pakistan possesses enormous potential to become a competitive regional economic power. Unlocking this potential requires investment in education, research, technology, industrial modernization, and infrastructure. These sectors generate sustainable economic returns that continue long after financial assistance has been utilized.

The private sector will remain the principal engine of economic growth. Government policies should focus on creating an environment where businesses can invest with confidence, industries can expand production, exporters can compete globally, and entrepreneurs can innovate without unnecessary regulatory obstacles. Stable exchange rates, predictable taxation, affordable energy, and transparent governance are among the most powerful incentives for domestic and foreign investment.

Pakistan also has an opportunity to strengthen its position within the rapidly evolving global economy. The world is witnessing transformational advances in artificial intelligence, digital manufacturing, renewable energy, biotechnology, and advanced logistics. Countries that invest today in innovation and human capital will become tomorrow's economic leaders. Pakistan cannot afford to remain on the sidelines of this technological revolution. Economic stability should therefore become a platform for technological advancement rather than merely an exercise in financial management.

Equally important is the need to diversify international economic partnerships. Constructive relations with the United States, China, the Gulf countries, Europe, multilateral financial institutions, and regional partners should be viewed as complementary rather than competitive. A balanced foreign economic policy expands trade opportunities, encourages technology transfer, attracts investment, and strengthens national resilience in an increasingly interconnected world.

Public confidence will also play a decisive role in Pakistan's economic future. Citizens, investors, and businesses respond positively when they observe consistency, transparency, and accountability. Confidence cannot be legislated, but it can be earned through responsible leadership and effective governance. Every successful reform, every increase in exports, every new investment, and every improvement in public services strengthens confidence in the country's future.

The coming years will determine whether Pakistan merely manages recurring economic challenges or successfully transforms them into opportunities for sustainable growth. Financial support, if secured, should become the catalyst for comprehensive reform, not a substitute for it. The real measure of success will not be the size of any financial package but the country's ability to create jobs, expand exports, strengthen institutions, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

Pakistan has overcome formidable challenges throughout its history. With prudent economic management, visionary leadership, and a shared national commitment to reform, the country has every opportunity to emerge stronger, more competitive, and more prosperous. The road ahead will require discipline, patience, and determination, but it also offers the promise of a brighter economic future. This is not merely a moment to seek financial support. It is a moment to reshape Pakistan's economic destiny for generations to come.

Shahid A. Khan

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PUBLIC AWARENESS MESSAGE

ILLEGAL LPG DECANTING:

A HIDDEN THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND ENERGY SECURITY

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) has become an essential source of energy for millions of households, businesses, and industries across Pakistan. It provides a reliable alternative where natural gas supply is limited and plays a vital role in meeting the country's growing energy needs. However, the increasing practice of illegal LPG decanting poses a serious threat to public safety, property, and the reputation of the LPG sector.

Illegal LPG decanting refers to the transfer of LPG from one cylinder to another or from bulk containers into smaller cylinders through unauthorized methods and without proper safety equipment. These activities are often carried out at roadside shops, small markets, and residential areas without compliance with safety regulations, creating dangerous conditions for consumers and surrounding communities.

LPG is a highly efficient and clean-burning fuel, but it is also highly flammable. When handled properly according to approved standards, LPG is extremely safe. However, improper handling, poor-quality equipment, lack of training, and unsafe storage practices can turn it into

a major hazard. Illegal decanting facilities usually operate without proper ventilation, fire protection systems, emergency controls, or trained personnel, significantly increasing the risk of accidents.

One of the biggest dangers associated with illegal LPG decanting is gas leakage. During unauthorized transfers, LPG can escape into the surrounding environment. Since LPG vapors are heavier than air, they can accumulate in low areas and remain unnoticed until they come into contact with an ignition source. A small spark from an electrical switch, vehicle, cigarette, or open flame can result in a devastating fire or explosion.

Another major concern is the use of unsafe equipment. Authorized LPG facilities follow strict safety standards and use approved pumps, dispensers, valves, hoses, and storage systems designed to handle LPG safely. In contrast, illegal operators often use modified equipment or unsafe methods to reduce costs. These practices increase the chances of leakage, cylinder damage, and uncontrolled release of gas.

Illegal decanting also puts consumers at risk because cylinders filled through unauthorized methods may not meet quality and weight standards.

Overfilling, damaged cylinders, or faulty valves can create dangerous situations inside homes and commercial premises. Consumers often have no knowledge



AZHAR RAFIQUE
Member, Advisory Board
TechnoBiz

of whether the cylinder they receive has been properly inspected, tested, and filled according to regulatory requirements.

The problem is not only a safety issue but also an economic and environmental challenge. Accidents caused by illegal LPG activities damage public confidence in the entire LPG industry and affect responsible companies that invest in safety, technology, and regulatory compliance. A strong LPG sector requires cooperation between regulators, licensed operators, dealers, and consumers to eliminate unsafe practices.

Public awareness is one of the most effective solutions. Consumers should purchase LPG only from authorized distributors and avoid buying cylinders from unlicensed roadside sellers. Communities should report unsafe LPG activities to relevant authorities to prevent potential tragedies before they occur.

The LPG industry also has a responsibility to promote safety education, provide proper training to dealers and technicians, and encourage the adoption of modern technologies. International safety standards, including guidelines for LPG storage, handling, and transportation, provide a roadmap for building a safer energy environment.

Pakistan's growing demand for LPG requires a professional, regulated, and safety-focused approach. Eliminating illegal decanting is not about restricting energy access, it is about protecting human lives, businesses, and communities. Every LPG consumer, dealer, and stakeholder has a role in creating a culture where safety comes first.

A safer Pakistan's LPG future depends on awareness, enforcement, and responsible practices. By replacing unsafe informal methods with regulated systems and modern technology, the country can ensure that LPG remains a reliable, affordable, and secure source of energy for generations to come.



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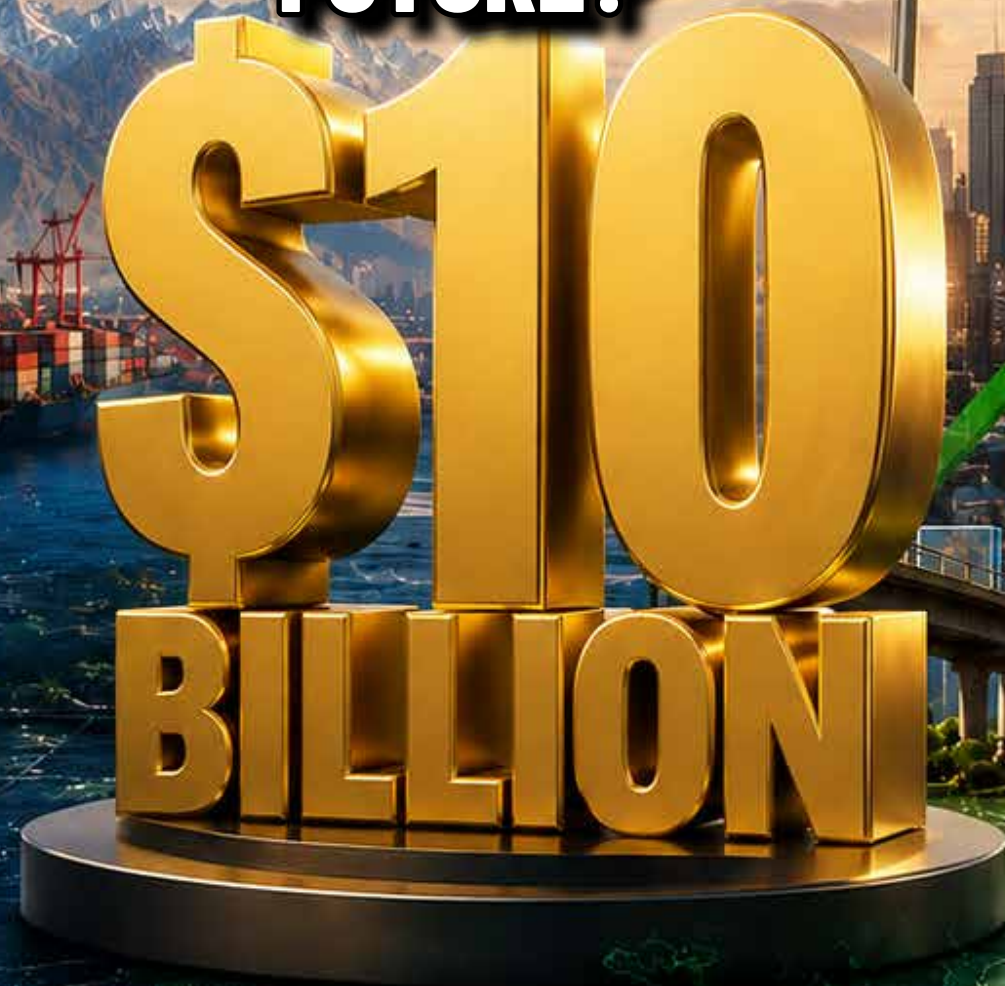
Prepare delicious café-style sandwiches at home with the Stove Top Sandwich Maker, designed to deliver perfectly toasted, crispy sandwiches with a golden-brown finish. Made from durable cast iron, it ensures even heat distribution for consistent cooking and long-lasting performance. Ideal for grilled cheese, paninis, stuffed sandwiches, and snacks, it locks in heat to create a crispy exterior while keeping fillings warm and melted. Its sturdy handle provides a secure grip, making it easy and safe to use on most stovetops. Simple to operate and easy to clean, this versatile kitchen essential is perfect for quick breakfasts, lunches, or evening snacks. Combining durability, convenience, and excellent cooking performance, the Stove Top Sandwich Maker is a must-have for every home kitchen and sandwich lover.



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A \$10 BILLION OPPORTUNITY: CAN U.S. FINANCIAL SUPPORT RESHAPE PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC FUTURE?



A proposed \$10 billion U.S. financial support facility could strengthen Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, stabilize the rupee, boost investor confidence, and accelerate economic growth. However, lasting prosperity will depend on continued structural reforms, sound governance, fiscal discipline, and strategic investment in productive sectors rather than reliance on external financing alone.

Pakistan once again finds itself at a defining economic crossroads. After years of navigating fiscal pressures, external debt obligations, high inflation, and persistent balance of payments challenges, reports that Islamabad is seeking a \$10 billion financial support facility from the United States have attracted significant international attention. While the proposal has yet to materialize into a formal agreement, the very prospect of such support has generated considerable discussion among economists, investors, policymakers, and the business community. If realized, the package could become one of the most significant financial arrangements in Pakistan's recent history, offering the country an opportunity not only to stabilize its economy but also to redefine its economic trajectory. Pakistan's economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience despite facing a succession of domestic and global shocks.

Political uncertainty, devastating floods, rising global commodity prices, supply chain disruptions, and elevated interest rates have collectively placed extraordinary pressure on public finances. At the same time, the country has remained committed to difficult economic reforms aimed at restoring macroeconomic stability. These reforms have included improving tax collection, reducing fiscal deficits, rationalizing energy subsidies, and strengthening foreign exchange reserves. While these measures have begun to produce encouraging results, Pakistan continues to require substantial external financing to maintain economic momentum and restore investor confidence.

A financial support facility of \$10 billion would represent far more than an injection of liquidity. It would send a powerful message to international financial markets that Pakistan enjoys the confidence of one of the world's largest economies. In global finance, confidence is often as valuable as capital itself. International investors closely monitor geopolitical relationships and financial commitments between nations.

A strong signal of support from the United States could significantly improve Pakistan's investment profile, reduce perceived sovereign risk, and encourage international banks, development institutions, and private investors to increase their



engagement with the country.

The most immediate benefit would be the strengthening of Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. Healthy reserves provide the central bank with greater flexibility to manage currency volatility, meet external debt obligations, and finance essential imports such as petroleum, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and industrial raw materials.

Stronger reserves also reduce speculation against the national currency, helping stabilize the Pakistani Rupee. Currency stability is particularly important because exchange rate volatility directly affects inflation by increasing the cost of imported goods and industrial inputs.

Inflation has remained one of the most pressing concerns for Pakistani households and businesses. Rising prices reduce purchasing power, increase production costs, and discourage long-term investment. Although inflation has shown signs of easing compared with previous years, maintaining price stability remains a major policy objective. Enhanced financial reserves would strengthen the government's ability to manage external shocks and reduce pressure on the exchange rate, thereby helping contain imported inflation. Stable prices ultimately improve consumer confidence and create a more predictable environment for businesses to plan investments and expand operations.

Perhaps one of the most significant implications of such a facility would be its impact on Pakistan's relationship with international financial institutions. Over the past several decades, Pakistan has frequently relied on IMF stabilization programs to address recurring balance of payments challenges. While IMF support has been essential during periods of financial stress, the accompanying structural reforms and fiscal conditions have often required politically difficult decisions.

Additional financial backing from strategic partners could reduce immediate financing pressures and provide Pakistan with greater policy flexibility while continuing necessary economic reforms. However, experts emphasize that external support should complement, not replace domestic structural reforms.

Investor confidence remains the cornerstone of sustainable economic growth. International investors seek stability, policy consistency, and predictable economic management before committing long-term capital. A substantial financial commitment supported by the United States could im-



prove Pakistan's sovereign credit outlook and reduce borrowing costs in international markets. Improved creditworthiness would make it easier for both the government and private sector to access international financing at more favorable interest rates. Lower financing costs would encourage industrial expansion, infrastructure development, and private investment across multiple sectors.

Pakistan possesses enormous economic potential driven by its strategic geographic location, young population, expanding digital economy, growing information technology exports, and abundant natural resources. Yet unlocking this potential requires sustained investment in infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, education, and technology. Financial stability creates the foundation upon which long-term development strategies can succeed. Without macroeconomic stability, even the most ambitious development plans struggle to attract the investment required for implementation.

The country's export sector stands to benefit considerably from greater financial stability. Export-oriented industries depend upon reliable access to imported machinery, industrial inputs, and working capital. Exchange rate stability allows exporters to price their products more competitively in international markets while reducing uncertainty associated with currency fluctuations. Pakistan's textile industry, information technology sector, pharmaceutical

manufacturers, engineering industries, agricultural exporters, and emerging technology companies could all benefit from improved financial conditions.

The technology sector deserves particular attention. Pakistan's digital economy has emerged as one of the country's fastest-growing industries. Software exports continue to expand, startups are attracting increasing international attention, and freelance professionals contribute billions of dollars in foreign exchange earnings each year. Improved economic stability would encourage venture capital investment, strengthen technology entrepreneurship, and accelerate digital transformation initiatives across both public and private sectors.

A stable macroeconomic environment also enables greater investment in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, semiconductor technologies, cloud computing, and digital infrastructure, positioning Pakistan to compete more effectively in the global knowledge economy.

The manufacturing sector would also gain from lower financial uncertainty. Industrial expansion requires confidence that exchange rates, interest rates, and input costs will remain relatively stable over the life of long-term investments. Domestic manufacturers often delay expansion during periods of macroeconomic uncertainty.

Greater financial stability could revive industrial confidence, increase factory uti-



lization, generate employment, and stimulate domestic production. Higher industrial output would reduce dependence on imports while strengthening exports, creating a more balanced and resilient economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of Pakistan's economy, would equally benefit from improved financial conditions. SMEs account for a significant share of employment and economic activity. Reduced inflation, greater banking sector confidence, and improved access to credit would enable these businesses to expand production, invest in technology, and hire additional workers. As business confidence improves, entrepreneurship is likely to accelerate, creating new opportunities for innovation and employment.

Foreign direct investment remains one of Pakistan's greatest untapped opportunities. Investors from the Gulf region, China, Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia continue to evaluate Pakistan's long-term prospects. A major financial support arrangement could reinforce the perception that Pakistan is entering a period of greater macroeconomic stability. Such confidence may encourage multinational corporations to establish manufacturing facilities, logistics centers, renewable energy projects, technology hubs, and export-oriented industries throughout the country.

Nevertheless, financial assistance alone cannot guarantee long-term prosperity. Sustainable economic development

depends primarily on sound governance, transparent institutions, consistent policymaking, fiscal discipline, judicial efficiency, and investment in human capital. External financing provides breathing space, but it cannot substitute for structural transformation. Pakistan must continue broadening its tax base, improving public sector efficiency, reducing energy sector losses, promoting exports, enhancing productivity, and investing in education, research, and innovation.

The government also has an opportunity to channel any future financial support toward productive investments rather than short-term consumption. Investments in transportation infrastructure, renewable energy, water management, digital connectivity, vocational education, healthcare, and industrial modernization would generate lasting economic returns. Every dollar invested in productive capacity strengthens Pakistan's ability to generate sustainable growth and reduce future dependence on external borrowing.

The geopolitical dimension of such financial cooperation should not be overlooked. Pakistan occupies a strategically important position connecting South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and China. Stronger economic cooperation with the United States could complement Pakistan's existing relationships with China, Gulf countries, multilateral development institutions, and regional trading partners.



A diversified network of international economic partnerships enhances resilience and expands opportunities for trade, technology transfer, investment, and innovation. Ultimately, Pakistan's future will depend less on the size of any financial package and more on how effectively that opportunity is utilized. History demonstrates that financial assistance delivers lasting benefits only when accompanied by visionary leadership, disciplined economic management, institutional reform, and private sector dynamism. If wisely managed, a \$10 billion support facility could become far more than temporary financial relief. It could serve as a catalyst for renewed investor confidence, stronger economic institutions, accelerated industrial growth, and a more competitive export economy.

Pakistan stands at a moment where cautious optimism is beginning to replace prolonged uncertainty. Encouraging improvements in inflation, foreign exchange management, export performance, and fiscal discipline indicate that the economy is gradually regaining stability. Should international financial support materialize alongside continued domestic reforms, Pakistan could enter a new phase of sustainable economic expansion characterized by stronger investment, greater employment, improved living standards, and enhanced global competitiveness. The opportunity is significant, but its ultimate success will depend on transforming financial assistance into long-term economic strength. That transformation would not merely stabilize Pakistan's economy; it could redefine the country's position within the rapidly evolving global economic landscape.



Pakistan and Iran are strengthening cooperation in security, trade, energy, connectivity, and diplomacy, aiming to boost regional stability, economic growth, investment, and long-term prosperity through practical collaboration and mutual trust.

PAKISTAN AND IRAN

STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL PEACE AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Pakistan and Iran have taken another significant step toward strengthening their long standing relationship by agreeing to deepen cooperation across a wide range of strategic sectors, including border security, counterterrorism, trade, energy, transportation, and regional connectivity. The renewed commitment reflects the shared determination of both neighboring countries to transform their common border from a security challenge into a gateway for economic growth, regional stability, and mutual prosperity.

Sharing a border of nearly nine hundred

kilometers, Pakistan and Iran have enjoyed centuries of cultural, religious, and historical ties. Their relationship extends beyond diplomacy and geography, encompassing deep people to people connections, shared traditions, and common regional interests. As neighboring Muslim nations, both countries recognize that close cooperation is essential for ensuring peace and stability not only along their borders but throughout South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

The latest understanding between Islamabad and Tehran comes at a time when the regional geopolitical landscape is undergoing rapid transformation. Conflicts in the Middle East, global economic uncertainty, changing energy markets, and evolving security challenges have reinforced the importance of regional cooperation. Both governments appreciate that no country can effectively address these

complex issues in isolation.

One of the most important outcomes of the renewed engagement is the commitment to strengthen border security. Both countries have experienced challenges arising from cross border terrorism, smuggling, organized crime, and illegal trafficking. Enhanced intelligence sharing, coordinated border management, and closer cooperation between security institutions can significantly improve stability while protecting the interests of both nations. A peaceful border would also create favorable conditions for expanding legal trade and encouraging investment in border regions.

Counterterrorism cooperation remains another important pillar of the bilateral relationship. Extremism continues to threaten economic development, investor confidence, and regional peace. Pakistan

and Iran have repeatedly emphasized that terrorism should not be allowed to undermine friendly relations between neighboring countries. Joint efforts against terrorist organizations and criminal networks demonstrate a shared commitment to ensuring that their territories are never used against each other's national interests.

Economic cooperation offers perhaps the greatest opportunity for transforming bilateral relations. Despite sharing a long border and considerable economic potential, trade between Pakistan and Iran remains well below its true capacity. Economists believe that bilateral trade could increase substantially through improved banking arrangements, simplified customs procedures, enhanced transportation links, and greater private sector engagement. Expanding formal trade would not only generate employment but also reduce illegal cross border commerce while increasing government revenues for both countries.

Energy cooperation has always occupied a central place in Pakistan Iran relations. Iran possesses some of the world's largest natural gas and energy reserves,

while Pakistan continues to face increasing energy demands driven by industrialization, urbanization, and population growth. Greater cooperation in electricity, natural gas, petroleum products, and renewable energy could strengthen Pakistan's energy security while creating new commercial opportunities for Iran.

Affordable and reliable energy supplies remain essential for sustaining industrial production, attracting investment, and supporting long term economic growth. The transportation and logistics sectors also present significant opportunities for collaboration. Improved road networks, border terminals, customs modernization, and regional transport corridors can facilitate faster movement of goods between South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

Pakistan's strategic ports and Iran's access to regional markets provide complementary advantages that can strengthen regional trade connectivity. Enhanced transportation infrastructure would reduce logistics costs, improve supply chain efficiency, and encourage greater regional commerce.

The private sectors of both countries have an equally important role to play. Business communities, chambers of commerce, investors, and industrial associations can expand cooperation in manufacturing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, information technology, mining, tourism, construction, and food processing. Joint ventures and business partnerships can generate employment, promote technology transfer, and stimulate industrial growth across diverse sectors.

Agriculture represents another promising area for cooperation. Both countries possess diverse agricultural resources and expertise in farming, irrigation, livestock development, and food processing. Sharing modern agricultural technologies and expanding agricultural trade could strengthen food security while creating new export opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses.

Regional connectivity has become one of the defining themes of twenty-first century economic development. Pakistan's strategic location provides access to South Asia, while Iran serves as an important gateway to the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Europe. Greater cooperation can strengthen regional supply chains, enhance connectivity with neighboring economies, and support broader regional integration through economic interdependence.

Diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and Iran also carries broader strategic significance. Both countries remain influential members of the Islamic world and share a common interest in promoting dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution, and regional stability. Constructive bilateral relations can contribute to wider diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions and encouraging regional cooperation.

The strengthening of bilateral relations also sends a positive message to international investors. Stable regional relationships reduce geopolitical uncertainty and create favorable conditions for trade, investment, infrastructure development, and industrial expansion. Investors favor regions where neighboring countries maintain constructive political and economic relations, as stability supports long-term business planning, investment confidence, and sustained economic growth.

For Pakistan, closer cooperation with Iran complements its broader foreign policy objective of maintaining balanced and constructive relations with regional partners. Strengthening economic diplomacy can diversify trade, expand export markets, improve energy security, and reduce dependence on distant supply chains. For Iran, enhanced cooperation with Pakistan provides greater access to regional markets and strengthens economic engagement with South Asia.

Ultimately, the success of this renewed partnership will depend upon practical implementation rather than diplomatic declarations alone. Agreements must translate into concrete projects, measurable trade growth, improved infrastructure, stronger institutional cooperation, and regular dialogue between governments and the private sector. Consistency, mutual trust, and political commitment will determine whether the full potential of Pakistan-Iran relations is realized.

The decision to deepen cooperation represents an encouraging development for both countries and the wider region. By prioritizing peace, economic collaboration, security cooperation, and regional connectivity, Pakistan and Iran can build a stronger partnership that benefits their citizens while contributing to stability and prosperity across Asia. If this momentum continues, the relationship can become a model of constructive neighborly cooperation founded on shared interests, mutual respect, and a common vision for a peaceful, economically integrated region.



PAKISTAN GETS A NEW AIRLINE WITH AFFORDABLE TICKET PRICES

Pakistan's aviation sector has welcomed a new entrant. South Air has officially launched its domestic flight operations, with its inaugural flight departing from Jinnah International Airport Karachi to Turbat, and from there onward to Quetta, while a second flight connected Bahawalpur to Islamabad via a stopover. The Pakistan Airports Authority has hailed this development as a significant addition to the country's domestic air connectivity. Yet, with four airlines already operating domestic and international routes, including Pakistan International Airlines, Air Sial, Airblue, and Fly Jinnah, which is partly owned by Air Arabia, one might ask why there was a need for yet another airline. And what do the investment prospects in Pakistan's aviation sector truly look like?

To understand the rationale behind South Air's emergence, one must first examine the peculiar state of Pakistan's domestic aviation market. Over the past two decades, the country's overall air traffic has grown considerably, from 12.8 million passengers in 2006-07 to 24.3 million in 2024-25, a jump of nearly 89 percent. However, this growth has been overwhelmingly driven by international travel, which has expanded at an annual rate of 5.46 percent, while domestic passenger numbers have remained virtually stagnant, growing at a meagre 0.19 percent per year. These figures reveal a stark imbalance. In-

SOUTH AIR HAS LAUNCHED OPERATIONS TO RECONNECT PAKISTAN'S UNDERSERVED CITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE REGIONAL FLIGHTS. BY STRENGTHENING DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY, ENCOURAGING COMPETITION, AND SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH, THE AIRLINE SIGNALS RENEWED INVESTMENT POTENTIAL WHILE HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR AVIATION REFORMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT.



ternational routes are booming, but internal connectivity has been left behind.

This stagnation is not for lack of demand, but rather for lack of service to smaller and remote cities. While the major trunk routes of Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad are well served and highly competitive, secondary cities like Bahawalpur, Turbat, and Quetta have suffered from erratic or nonexistent air links. Bahawalpur, for instance, went three full years without any commercial air service until South Air stepped in. Similarly, Turbat and Quetta have long been underserved, with only sporadic flights that often failed to meet the needs of local populations. The existing carriers, focused on profitability, have naturally gravitated towards the high density corridors, leaving vast swathes of the country with little to no air connectivity.

South Air was conceived precisely to fill this gap. Rather than competing head on with established players on the busiest routes, the airline has positioned itself as a regional connector, targeting cities that have been neglected for years. Its choice of aircraft, the ATR 72 turboprop, is a strategic one. These planes are fuel efficient, cost effective to operate, and capable of landing on shorter runways, making them ideal for

serving smaller airports that cannot accommodate larger jetliners. The airline's CEO, Nusrat Fatima, has emphasised that South Air is not merely a commercial venture but a national effort to strengthen Pakistan's aviation fabric and bring remote communities into the economic mainstream.

The early results have been tangible. Within hours of its launch, South Air had successfully operated eight domestic flights, restoring air links that had been severed for years. Bahawalpur once again has a scheduled connection to the capital, and Turbat is now linked directly to Karachi and Quetta. The initial schedule includes weekly flights to Turbat and three weekly services to Bahawalpur, with plans to expand to Peshawar, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur, Gwadar, and eventually northern tourist destinations like Gilgit, Chitral, and Skardu.

Pricing is another area where South Air has chosen a distinctive path. For instance, the base fare from Karachi to Islamabad via Bahawalpur is set at 14,218 rupees, substantially lower than the 20,000 to 25,000 rupees typically charged on direct flights by competitors. The tradeoff, of course, is a longer journey time due to the stopover, but for price sensitive travellers,

and there are many in Pakistan, this offers a compelling alternative. It also introduces a new dynamic into the market, potentially forcing other carriers to reconsider their pricing strategies on secondary routes.

Aviation experts have welcomed South Air's entry, arguing that healthy competition will ultimately benefit consumers, encourage operational efficiency, and stimulate trade, investment, and tourism in previously isolated regions. The Competition Commission of Pakistan, in its own sectoral reviews, has repeatedly stressed the need to strengthen domestic carriers and reduce the country's over reliance on foreign airlines, particularly those from the Gulf, which now dominate Pakistan's international traffic.

Behind South Air stands the SOS Group, a diversified conglomerate with interests in security, energy, technology, healthcare, education, shipping, hospitality, and aviation. Headquartered in Multan, the group brings substantial financial and managerial resources to the venture. Its chairman, Kunwar Tariq, has expressed full confidence in the airline's professional capabilities and its ability to realise the vision of improved air connectivity across Pakistan. This backing provides South Air with a degree of stability that many new startups lack, which is crucial given the capital intensive nature of the aviation business.

But the larger question remains. What are the broader investment prospects in Pakistan's aviation sector? The answer is cautiously optimistic. The recent privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines marks a watershed moment. Following the sale, a direct investment of 125 billion rupees is expected to flow into PIA, with an additional 45 billion rupees anticipated in the coming months. Plans are already underway to expand the airline's fleet from 18 to 38 aircraft, and negotiations with Boeing for 16 new planes are ongoing. This influx of capital and modernisation could transform PIA from a loss making behemoth into a competitive carrier, provided the management and governance reforms are sustained.

Furthermore, the country is witnessing significant infrastructure upgrades. The first European Aviation Safety Agency approved Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul facility is being established at Islamabad International Airport, a development that could position Pakistan as a regional hub for aircraft maintenance. Similar moderni-

sation projects are planned for Karachi and Lahore airports. These initiatives, if executed properly, will not only improve passenger experience but also create new business opportunities for local and foreign investors.

However, the sector is not without its formidable challenges. The Competition Commission's reports highlight a fragmented policy environment, with inconsistent regulations across multiple authorities, a lack of a unified national aviation vision, and frequent policy reversals that deter long term investment. Domestic carriers have historically struggled with financial fragility, and several have exited the market over the years. Airports remain underutilised, with many secondary airfields operating far below capacity. And the growing dominance of Gulf carriers on international routes continues to siphon off passengers who would otherwise fly on Pakistani airlines.

There is also the issue of infrastructure readiness at smaller airports. While South Air's ATR aircraft are well suited to short runways, many secondary airports lack adequate terminal facilities, ground handling equipment, and navigation aids. Upgrading these will require coordinated investment from both the public and private sectors. Moreover, fuel costs and taxes remain high, eating into the margins of domestic operators. Without targeted policy support, such as reduced sales tax on aviation fuel, lower landing fees for regional routes, or subsidies for unprofitable but socially necessary connections, new entrants like South Air may struggle to sustain their operations over the long haul.

South Air's launch, therefore, is both a test case and a catalyst. It tests whether there is a sustainable business model for serving Pakistan's secondary cities, and it catalyses a much needed conversation about the future of domestic aviation. If the airline can maintain its promised standards of punctuality, safety, transparency, and customer service, it could prove that profitability and social utility are not mutually exclusive. It could also encourage other investors to look beyond the crowded trunk routes and explore the untapped potential of regional air travel.

Another dimension worth noting is the socioeconomic impact. Improved air connectivity does more than just move people. It moves goods, ideas, and opportunities. For cities like Turbat and Bahawalpur, which are agricultural and commercial

hubs in their own right, reliable air links can accelerate trade, attract investment, and facilitate medical tourism and education. Northern areas like Skardu and Chitral, which depend heavily on tourism, stand to benefit immensely from affordable and regular flights, especially if the airline coordinates with tour operators and local governments to promote package travel.

At the same time, South Air must navigate the same treacherous waters that have claimed previous regional carriers. Operational costs, fuel price volatility, currency depreciation, and regulatory red tape are all real threats. The airline will need to maintain high load factors, optimise its route network, and perhaps explore cargo revenue to diversify its income streams. Its partnership with SOS Group provides a safety net, but ultimately, the airline's survival will depend on its management's ability to adapt quickly to changing market conditions.

The timing of South Air's entry is also significant. Pakistan is currently undergoing a broader economic stabilisation effort, with the International Monetary Fund programme, structural reforms, and a gradual improvement in foreign exchange reserves. While inflation remains high and consumer spending is under pressure, affordable air travel could find a niche among middle class families who have historically been priced out of flying. South Air's low cost model, combined with its focus on underserved routes, aligns well with this emerging demand.

Looking ahead, the airline has announced ambitious expansion plans. After consolidating its initial routes, it intends to add Peshawar, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur, and Gwadar to its network. The inclusion of Gwadar is particularly strategic, given the city's growing importance as a deep sea port and economic hub under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Regular flights to Gwadar would not only serve business travellers but also support the logistical needs of the port and the wider development of Balochistan.

In the longer term, South Air could potentially explore international routes to neighbouring countries, especially to Gulf states where there is a large Pakistani diaspora. But that would require acquiring larger aircraft and obtaining international traffic rights, a complex and competitive arena. For now, the airline is wisely focusing on getting its domestic operations right before venturing abroad.



In summary, South Air's arrival in Pakistan's aviation sector is not an arbitrary addition but a strategic response to a clear market failure, the lack of reliable, affordable air links to secondary cities. Its choice of turboprop aircraft, its pricing strategy, and its focus on social connectivity distinguish it from the incumbents. While the challenges are numerous, ranging from infrastructure deficits to policy inconsistencies, the opportunities are equally compelling. The airline serves as a reminder that aviation is not just about moving aircraft. It is about connecting communities, unlocking economic potential, and bridging the geographic divides that have long hindered Pakistan's cohesion and development. Whether South Air succeeds in the long run will depend on the same factors that determine success in any business, execution, adaptability, and customer trust, but its very existence has already rekindled hope in cities that had almost given up on the skies. And that, perhaps, is the most important contribution it has made so far. ■

YBG is committed to promote renewable energy in Pakistan for a sustainable future.

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MS SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
REGULAR MEMBER SPEECH AND HEARING
ASSOCIATION OF PAKISTAN (SHAP)

EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

Effective treatment for CAS involves frequent, intensive speech-language therapy focusing on motor planning. Families are advised to begin therapy as soon as CAS is identified. ASHA recommends starting with therapy 3–5 times per week. Research consistently shows that higher intensity (more sessions per week) leads to better outcomes for CAS. In fact, many studies use protocols of about 4 sessions per

week (often 1 hour each) over multiple weeks or months. The principle is: “more practice yields more improvement”.

MOTOR-BASED TREATMENT APPROACHES:

Because CAS is a motor planning problem, the therapy targets the planning and execution of speech movements. This means clinicians and families should focus on repeated practice of sounds, syllables, and words in structured ways, rather than only doing nonspeech mouth exercises (which research shows are not effective in

CAS). Therapy often uses multi-sensory cues to help the child learn the movements. For example, visual cues (watching a mirror or the therapist’s mouth), tactile cues (feeling where the tongue should go), and auditory cues (listening to correct models) are all employed. These methods help the brain form clearer motor plans. Children might practice sound sequences slowly and with repetition to build accurate motor programs.

RECOMMENDED THERAPY PROGRAMS:

Several specific therapy programs have evidence supporting their use in CAS:

RAPID SYLLABLE TRANSITION TREATMENT (REST):

Focuses on improving transitions between syllables and prosody by practicing nonsense syllables and word sets at varying speeds.

NUFFIELD DYSPRAXIA PROGRAMME – 3RD EDITION (NDP3):

A hierarchical drill-based program that moves from simple to complex syllable shapes, emphasizing correct sound production.

DYNAMIC TEMPORAL AND TACTILE CUEING (DTTC):

A motor learning approach involving modeling, cueing (tapping out syllables), and gradually adding speed.

INTEGRATED PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS (IPA) APPROACH:

Combines speech movement practice with phonological awareness tasks for older children.

OTHERS:

Techniques like ultrasound biofeedback (showing the tongue on screen) can help in older children with milder CAS.

Cochrane reviews and systematic summaries (e.g. Murray et al., 2014; Morgan et al., 2018) note that ReST and NDP3 have the strongest evidence from randomized trials, while DTTC is also widely recommended by experts. No single program is best for every child. In practice, therapists tailor the approach to the child’s age, ability, and severity. For example, ReST and IPA might suit older children with milder CAS, whereas DTTC and NDP3 are often used with younger or more severely affected children.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS:

Randomized controlled trials have shown that both ReST and NDP3 significantly improve speech accuracy in children with CAS. In one head-to-head study (Murray et al., 2015), both programs helped children (ages 4–12) make gains: NDP3 gave more immediate improvement, while ReST led to better maintenance of gains over time. This suggests these motor-based programs can produce lasting change when delivered intensively. Systematic reviews have concluded that evidence-based CAS therapy must prioritize speech sound practice and motor learning principles



(vs. non-specific articulation drills). In short, the goal is to train the brain’s motor sequences, not just to practice sounds in isolation.

TREATMENT INTENSITY & STRUCTURE:

Clinically, CAS therapy is often organized in cycles. For example, one effective model is blocks of therapy (e.g. 4 sessions per week for 3–4 weeks), then a break, then another block. Research suggests even a year or more of periodic treatment may be needed for substantial progress. Short, low-frequency therapy (e.g. once/week) is generally ineffective. Group therapy is usually not recommended as a primary approach, because CAS requires individualized, targeted practice. Importantly, all research emphasizes active practice: children must say the sounds and words repeatedly (often up to hundreds of times per session) to build motor plans.

HOME PRACTICE AND AAC:

Parents and caregivers play a key role. SLPs often provide home practice exercises so skills generalize outside therapy. Using visual and tactile cues at home can reinforce therapy. In the meantime, many children with severe CAS benefit from augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) (such as picture boards or speech apps). AAC gives the child a reliable way to communicate while speech is still emerging. Importantly, using AAC does not discourage speaking; rather, it reduces frustration and provides a model for correct language while the child practices speech.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:

Progress in CAS can be slow, especially at first. Families should be prepared for a long-term effort. However, most children can improve significantly with the right intervention. Over time, many become increasingly intelligible and can catch up functionally in school. The key is consistency and evidence-based methods. Continual collaboration between therapists, parents, and teachers helps ensure that gains in therapy translate to everyday communication. ■

EFFECTIVE CAS TREATMENT REQUIRES INTENSIVE, MOTOR-BASED SPEECH THERAPY WITH FREQUENT PRACTICE, INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMS, HOME SUPPORT, AND AAC WHEN NEEDED, IMPROVING SPEECH ACCURACY, COMMUNICATION, AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES THROUGH CONSISTENT INTERVENTION.

اپیل برائے زکوٰۃ

کینسر کئیر ہسپتال لاہور اس وقت کینسر آؤٹ ڈور (OPD)، ریڈی ایشن، کیموتھراپی، بریسٹ کینسر اور بڑی آنت کے کینسر کی سرجری جیسی سہولیات مستحق مریضوں کو فری فراہم کر رہا ہے۔

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THE UNREPORTED VICTORY: CHINA'S SUPERCOMPUTING BREAKTHROUGH WITHOUT GPUS

CHINA HAS ACHIEVED A MAJOR SUPERCOMPUTING MILESTONE BY DEVELOPING EXASCALE SYSTEMS WITHOUT RELYING ON U.S. GPUS OR CUDA. DRIVEN BY INDIGENOUS INNOVATION, SYSTEM-LEVEL ENGINEERING, AND STRATEGIC SELF-RELIANCE, THE BREAKTHROUGH HIGHLIGHTS CHINA'S GROWING TECHNOLOGICAL RESILIENCE DESPITE EXPORT RESTRICTIONS AND GLOBAL CHIP SANCTIONS.

AUGUST 2026



The world of high-performance computing is often a quiet battleground, one where national pride and technological supremacy are measured in floating-point operations per second. For years, the semi-annual release of the TOP500 list of the world's fastest supercomputers was a familiar ritual, a global scorecard dominated by a three-way tussle between the United States, Japan, and a rapidly ascending China. The narrative from 2010 onward was one of a thrilling, neck-and-neck race, with titles traded back and forth like championship belts in a high-stakes technological wrestling match. But in 2023, the script was torn up. China, which had been a regular contender, abruptly stopped submitting its systems for ranking, a move widely interpreted by outlets like Reuters as a direct consequence of years of escalating chip and computing-related export controls imposed by the US. It was a silent withdrawal, a strategic pivot that spoke volumes more than any benchmark score ever could.

This abrupt cessation of participation was not an admission of defeat, but rather a profound strategic realignment. The narrative that began to emerge from analysts and industry observers was not one of a country falling behind, but of one choosing to play a different game entirely. Engadget astutely noted that "there is no single dominant technology path to leadership-class computing," suggesting that the field was ripe for diversification and that the established Western paradigm, heavily reliant on specific architectures and standards, was not the only road to computational supremacy. Adding another layer to this interpretation, Reuters reported that China's victory on the list in the years prior might have been less about a desperate need for global validation and more a calculated move to signal its chip design ambitions to the world—a change from recent years where the focus was purely on securing the top spot. The message was clear: China was no longer just playing the game; it was redefining it.

At the heart of this transformation is a story of overcoming formidable technical hurdles through sheer systemic innovation. The ability to build an exascale computing system—one capable of a billion billion calculations per second—is an extraordinary feat under any circumstances. But to achieve this without relying on the established Western technological bedrock—namely, US-made Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), Nvidia's dominant CUDA ecosystem for programming these

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powerful processors, or specific Western interconnect standards that bind the thousands of nodes together—is nothing short of revolutionary. According to Chen, an industry expert, this achievement signifies that a comprehensive, system-level technological framework is now largely in place within China. This is the beginning of a new era where the country’s high-performance computing (HPC) sector is transitioning, however gradually, from a state of external dependence toward full-fledged system autonomy. It’s a shift from relying on the components provided by others to designing and integrating an entire computational ecosystem from the ground up.

This journey, however, is not without its persistent challenges and underlying constraints. Chen cautions that while the system-level integration is a monumental success, foundational vulnerabilities remain. Areas such as architectural licensing, which often involve proprietary instruction sets from Western companies, advanced manufacturing processes that require cutting-edge lithography tools currently inaccessible due to export controls, and certain critical parts of the chip fabrication supply chain still represent significant bottlenecks. This reality underscores a crucial point: China’s HPC sector is still a work in progress, a complex project navigating a difficult path from external reliance towards a fully independent future. The bans and restrictions have not stopped progress, but they have certainly reshaped its trajectory, forcing a “change of path” that is both challenging and creatively potent.

This “change of path” is perhaps best exemplified by systems like “LineShine,” which Chen highlights as a beacon of this new philosophy. “LineShine,” he notes, embodies a system-level innovation strategy strikingly similar to the approach taken by other Chinese tech giants when they found themselves under immense external pressure. It echoes the spirit of Huawei’s “Tau Law,” a principle that emphasizes resilience and fundamental breakthroughs in the face of adversity. Where previous generations of Chinese supercomputers might have leaned on a hybrid architecture of CPUs and accelerators, “LineShine” reportedly achieves its exascale performance using a pure CPU architecture. This is a deliberate, monumental shift. Similarly, Huawei advances its own computational prowess through a combination of advanced chip design, algorithmic optimization, and sophisticated packaging technologies. Both trajectories, Chen argues, represent



a fundamental “change of path” rather than a simple catch-up competition. It’s a move away from trying to outperform the West on their own technological terms and toward blazing new trails in system architecture and engineering optimization.

The momentum of this new trajectory is not confined to the creation of a few massive, record-breaking machines. The ecosystem is expanding and democratizing. In a significant development on January 4, China’s National Supercomputing Internet Platform announced that its user base had surpassed one million. This is more than just a number; it’s a key inflection point marking the shift of supercomputing resources from the hands of a few elite national laboratories and research institutions to a more universal, accessible service model. This “supercomputing internet” aims to connect the nation’s disparate high-performance computing resources, making them available to a wider community of researchers, engineers, and businesses across the country. By building a user base of a million, China is not just building machines; it is cultivating a vast, skilled workforce that will drive future innovation and ensure that these powerful tools are directly fueling national progress across countless scientific and industrial domains.

Looking at the broader picture, Ma, an analyst of the sector, offers a sobering and profound perspective on China’s supercomputing breakthrough. He argues that this should not be perceived as a sudden, flash-in-the-pan “overtake on a bend”—a burst of unexpected speed that leaves competitors in the dust. Rather, it is the fruit of long-term, consistent technological accumulation and a painstaking process of capability rebuilding. For decades, even

as it participated in the global race and acquired technology from abroad, China was also building its own foundational research, training its own experts, and developing its own unique approaches to complex systems. The export controls and external pressures of recent years acted as a powerful catalyst, accelerating this indigenous development and forcing the country to rely on its own resources and ingenuity more than ever before. The achievement, therefore, is a testament to strategic foresight and sustained national effort.

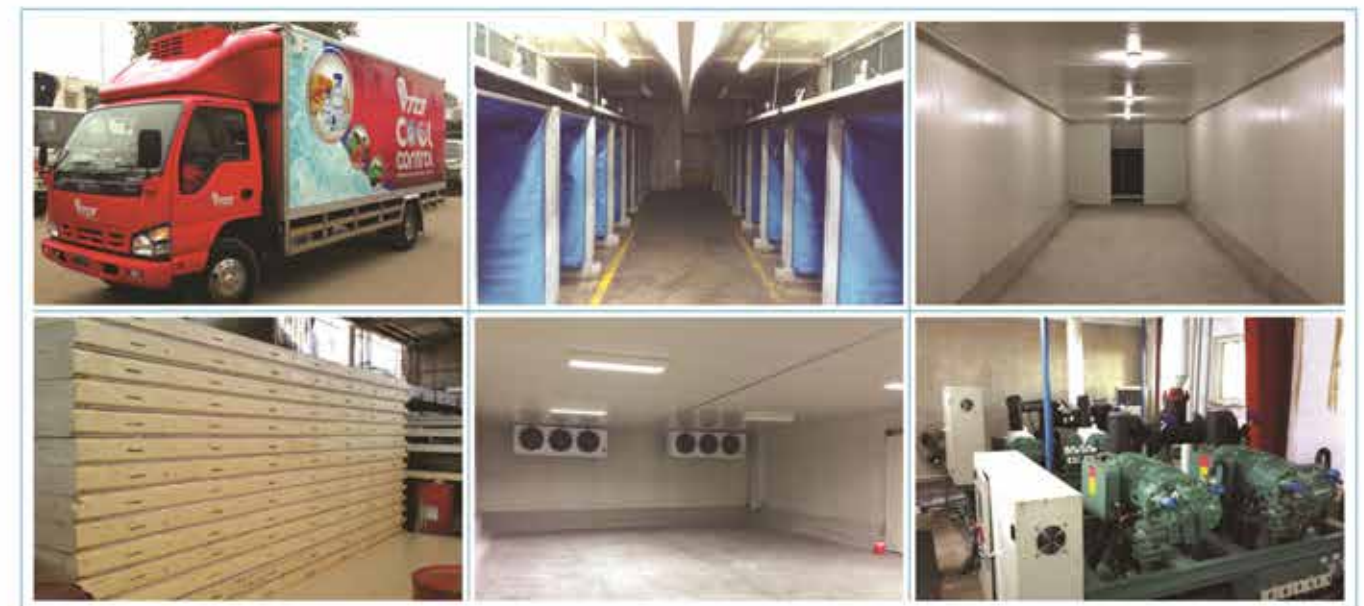
Ultimately, Ma notes, the significance of this achievement extends far beyond the realm of technology. It is a clear demonstration of China’s institutional strengths and the resilience of its development model when tested under sustained external pressure. The ability to mobilize a vast pool of talent, coordinate resources across academia and industry, and maintain a long-term strategic vision even when confronted with formidable barriers is a unique characteristic of the national approach. The successful navigation of the “chip war” and the resulting breakthrough in supercomputing is a powerful symbol of the country’s determination to achieve self-reliance in critical fields. It underscores a national narrative of resilience, where constraints are transformed into opportunities for innovation, and where the very act of being cut off from the global technology supply chain serves as the impetus for building a more robust, autonomous, and ultimately, more resilient technological future. The story that began in 2010, with the trading of titles on the global stage, has thus evolved into a more complex and consequential narrative of national transformation and strategic independence.



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MANUFACTURE HERE, EXPORT EVERYWHERE: PAKISTAN WANTS SAMSUNG TO BUILD ITS EXPORT HUB

On July 22, 2026, a meeting took place at the Ministry of Commerce in Islamabad that could mark a significant turning point for Pakistan's industrial ambitions. Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan met with a delegation from Samsung Pakistan, led by the company's country head, and extended a formal invitation that went far beyond the usual diplomatic pleasantries. The Pakistani government asked Samsung to transform the country into a regional hub for manufacturing, refurbishing, and exporting mobile phones. It was a bold pitch, one that positioned Pakistan not just as a market for Samsung's products but as a strategic base from which the South Korean giant could serve emerging economies across Africa and beyond.

PAKISTAN HAS INVITED SAMSUNG TO ESTABLISH THE COUNTRY AS A REGIONAL HUB FOR MANUFACTURING, REFURBISHING, AND EXPORTING SMARTPHONES. BACKED BY POLICY SUPPORT AND EXPORT AMBITIONS, THE INITIATIVE AIMS TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT, CREATE JOBS, BOOST VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION, AND INTEGRATE PAKISTAN INTO GLOBAL ELECTRONICS SUPPLY CHAINS.

The minister was direct in his invitation, assuring the Samsung delegation of the government's full support in facilitating investment that would boost exports, increase value addition, and expand industrial production. He encouraged Samsung to look beyond Pakistan's domestic market and export Pakistan-manufactured smartphones to emerging markets, particularly Africa. The message was clear: Pakistan has a growing manufacturing base, and it is time to leverage that foundation to become part of global supply chains rather than serving only local demand. The South Asian nation, long viewed primarily as a consumption market for electronics, was making a play to become a production and export hub.

One of the most interesting aspects of the discussion was Samsung's proposal to establish certified mobile phone refurbishment facilities in Pakistan. The minister appreciated this idea, recognizing that a

regulated refurbishment ecosystem could do more than just strengthen local industry. It could also create export opportunities for professionally refurbished devices while generating employment and promoting technical expertise. In a world increasingly conscious of electronic waste and the circular economy, certified refurbishment represents a forward-thinking approach. It allows manufacturers to extend the life cycle of their products, offer more affordable options to consumers, and capture value from devices that might otherwise end up in landfills. For Pakistan, it could mean developing a new skillset in the workforce and establishing a reputation for quality refurbishment that could attract other global brands.

The Samsung delegation, for its part, provided the commerce ministry with a briefing on the progress of Pakistan's mobile phone manufacturing sector and highlighted the company's existing invest-

ment in local assembly. However, they also raised significant concerns about the current policy environment. The delegation highlighted changes to the taxation structure and the narrowing of the tariff differential between Semi Knocked Down (SKD) and Completely Built Unit (CBU) mobile phones. This narrowing, they argued, had significantly reduced the competitiveness of locally manufactured mobile phones. To understand this concern, it is helpful to consider the economics of local assembly. SKD kits, which contain semi-assembled components, are imported and then assembled locally, adding value through domestic labor and creating jobs. CBU units are fully assembled phones imported ready for sale. To encourage local assembly and investment, governments typically maintain a tariff differential that makes importing SKD kits cheaper than importing finished phones. When that differential narrows, the cost advantage of





local assembly diminishes, making it less attractive for companies to invest in manufacturing facilities. Samsung requested that the government maintain a reasonable tariff differential to encourage continued investment and local manufacturing.

The delegation also expressed concerns over the commercial import of used mobile phones, stating that it undermines domestic manufacturing despite Pakistan having sufficient production capacity. This is a legitimate concern for any manufacturer. When used phones can be imported freely, they flood the market with cheaper alternatives that compete directly with locally assembled new devices. This not only hurts sales but also disincentivizes investment in local production. The Samsung delegation proposed replacing commercial imports of used phones with certified refurbished phones, under which original equipment manufacturers would establish authorized refurbishment facilities in Pakistan. This approach would allow consumers to purchase quality-assured devices backed by warranties while simultaneously protecting the domestic manufacturing base. It is a solution that addresses both consumer demand for affordable devices and the industry's need for a level playing field.

Responding to these proposals, Minister Jam Kamal acknowledged the industry's concerns regarding taxation and said these would be examined within the broader fiscal framework. However, he emphasized that any incentives should be linked with investment, localization, exports, and value addition. This is a crucial

point. The minister was signaling that the government is willing to consider policy adjustments, but they must be tied to tangible outcomes. The era of blanket incentives without accountability is over. If Samsung wants a favorable tariff structure, it must demonstrate a commitment to deepening its investment, increasing local value addition, and generating exports. The minister further directed the industry to submit detailed proposals on certified refurbishment, export potential, investment commitments, and international best practices to support the formulation of the revised Mobile Device Manufacturing Policy. He stressed that any decision regarding commercial imports of used mobile phones should be evidence-based, phased, and supported by the availability of certified locally refurbished alternatives to safeguard consumer interests.

The meeting between Commerce Minister Jam Kamal and the Samsung delegation represents a significant moment in Pakistan's industrial policy journey. The government is signaling that it wants to move beyond being a low-value assembly destination and become a hub for genuine manufacturing, technology transfer, and exports. For Samsung, the invitation offers an opportunity to deepen its presence in a market of over 240 million people and use Pakistan as a springboard to reach Africa and other emerging markets. However, the success of this initiative will depend on the government's ability to create a policy environment that is predictable, competitive, and supportive of long-term investment. The concerns raised by Samsung about



tariff differentials and used phone imports are valid and will need to be addressed if Pakistan is to realize its ambition.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to industrial development, the minister said Pakistan offers significant opportunities for global technology companies and expressed confidence that stronger collaboration with leading manufacturers such as Samsung would contribute to investment, employment generation, and increased exports. The vision is clear: a Pakistan that manufactures, refurbishes, and exports mobile phones to the world. Whether that vision becomes reality depends on the choices made in the coming months. The government must balance the interests of domestic manufacturers, the demands of global players like Samsung, and the needs of consumers who want affordable, high-quality devices. If it can strike that balance, the July 22 meeting may well be remembered as the day Pakistan's electronics industry took a giant leap forward. If not, it will be another missed opportunity in a long history of unfulfilled industrial promises. The ball is now in both the government's and Samsung's court. The proposals have been made, the concerns have been raised, and the path forward has been outlined. What remains is the hard work of implementation, negotiation, and building a partnership that delivers for Pakistan's economy and its people.



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A DECADE IN THE MAKING: INSIDE THE BILLION-DOLLAR GAMBLE OF

GTA 6

The video game world is holding its collective breath, and for good reason. After over a decade of fervent speculation, whispered rumors, and a seemingly endless wait, Rockstar Games has finally confirmed that the next installment in its legendary franchise, Grand Theft Auto VI, is on the horizon and will be in players' hands sooner than many dared to hope. The official announcement that pre-orders will commence on June 25th has sent a shockwave of excitement through the community, solidifying what many analysts are already calling the biggest gaming launch of the year and potentially of the entire decade. The buzz is palpable, a testament to the cultural behemoth that GTA has become, and while details are still trickling out at a controlled pace, the information we do have paints a picture of an ambitious, record-breaking project that aims to redefine the open-world genre once again.

The most immediate and concrete piece of news is the release date. Rockstar has set November 19th of this year as the official drop date for GTA VI, and with the pre-order timeline now locked in, this date feels more certain than ever before. This time, however, the launch will be a bit more focused. The game is set to debut exclusively on the current generation of home consoles: the PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X and S. This strategic move allows Rockstar to fully leverage the advanced hardware capabilities of these machines, potentially

delivering a level of graphical fidelity, environmental density, and systemic complexity that simply wouldn't be possible on older platforms. As for PC gamers, a persistent and passionate community, the silence from Rockstar is deafening. No release date has been provided for a PC port, and there's been no mention of a Nintendo Switch 2 version, leaving those players in a state of anxious anticipation, hoping that their wait won't be as prolonged as it was for previous Rockstar titles.

Of course, the elephant in the room, or rather, the question on every potential buyer's lips, is the price. Rockstar and its parent company, Take-Two Interactive, have remained coy on this front, leaving the gaming world to speculate wildly. The production budget alone is a staggering topic of conversation. Industry analysts estimate that GTA VI has cost over one billion dollars to develop, making it the most expensive video game ever created. This astronomical figure has naturally led to speculation that the game will carry a premium price tag. Some analysts have floated the idea that it could be the first standard edition game to break the \$100 barrier, a significant jump from the current \$70 standard for AAA titles. The expectation is that the official pricing will be unveiled alongside the start of pre-orders in late June, a moment that will either confirm these fears or put them to rest.

Beyond the logistics of purchasing the game, the core experience itself is beginning to take shape. For the first time in the franchise's long history, players will be introduced to a fully playable female protagonist, a long-overdue move that signals a new era for the series. Her name is Lucia, and she is set to be one half of a 'Bonnie and Clyde' style criminal duo, alongside her partner-in-crime and significant other, Jason. The two cinematic trailers released so far have set the stage for a narrative

GRAND THEFT AUTO VI LAUNCHES FOR PLAYSTATION 5 AND XBOX SERIES X/S, INTRODUCING DUAL PROTAGONISTS LUCIA AND JASON IN A MODERN VICE CITY. WITH RECORD-BREAKING ANTICIPATION, BILLION-DOLLAR DEVELOPMENT, AND GROUNDBREAKING GAMEPLAY, GTA VI IS POISED TO BECOME ONE OF GAMING'S BIGGEST CULTURAL MILESTONES.



steeped in high-stakes crime, corruption, and a desperate, ill-fated attempt at an easy score that goes spectacularly wrong. This dual-protagonist dynamic suggests a narrative rich with interpersonal conflict, loyalty, and betrayal, promising a character-driven story that fans have come to expect from Rockstar.

The setting for this new saga is a return to a fan-favorite location, albeit reimagined for a new generation. The state of Leonida is Rockstar's satirical, over-the-top take on Florida, a perfect playground for the mayhem and absurdity the series is known for. At its heart lies Vice City, a sprawling metropolis inspired by Miami, which is making a triumphant return. The neon-drenched, cocaine-fueled nostalgia of the 1980s is gone, replaced by a modern, vibrant, and likely even more chaotic contemporary setting. The recent cover art released by Rockstar, featuring a flamingo and an alligator, serves as a perfect visual shorthand for the unique, sun-soaked danger that awaits players in this new world. This feels less like a simple remake and more like an ambitious spiritual successor, taking everything that made the original Vice City iconic and expanding it into a vast, modern state.

The sheer scale of the project is a testament to the time and resources invested. The previous game, GTA V, was released way back in September 2013. It became an instant phenomenon, selling over 230 million copies to date and cementing its place as one of the best-selling games of all time. The gap between that release and GTA VI has been immense, a decade-long chasm that has felt even longer for fans. Whether

Rockstar was working on the next GTA immediately after GTA V's release is unclear, as 2018 saw the launch of Red Dead Redemption 2, another massive undertaking that consumed the studio's primary focus for years. It wasn't until February 2022 that Rockstar officially confirmed GTA VI was in active development. The immense pressure to meet the impossibly high standard set by its predecessor, combined with the ballooning costs of modern game development, are the primary reasons for this extended wait.

This development cycle has not been without its drama. In a notorious incident just months after the official confirmation, a group of teenage hackers infiltrated Rockstar's systems and leaked dozens of early development videos and images of the game. This unprecedented breach was a significant blow to the studio and a major headache for the developers. Additionally, the development process has been shadowed by internal issues, including allegations of 'union-busting' by former employees at Rockstar North in Edinburgh, the very studio where GTA VI is being crafted. These controversies, however, have done little to dampen the public's insatiable appetite for the game.

The reason for this feverish excitement is simple: Grand Theft Auto is one of the most successful and profitable entertainment properties in history. Its influence on popular culture is immeasurable. The 'sandbox' style of gameplay, which gives players an unprecedented level of freedom to explore a massive open world and interact with it in a multitude of ways, revolutionized the industry. As video game

journalist Vic Hood aptly puts it, the series has "consistently pushed the boundaries of technology and gameplay," while the online component, GTA Online, helped define the live-service model that dominates gaming today. Furthermore, the games have always served as a sharp, satirical mirror to the modern world, skewering music, entertainment, social media, politics, and celebrity culture with a cynical and often hilarious edge. This uncanny ability to capture the zeitgeist is a key reason why the series resonates so deeply.

The immense excitement surrounding GTA VI is evident in the numbers. The two official gameplay trailers have collectively amassed a staggering 447 million views, a figure that dwarfs most other game announcements. For the gaming community, the wait is nearly over. This isn't just a game release; it's a cultural moment. ■



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THE FUTURE OF SURGERY: HOW CHINESE REMOTE ROBOTICS IS TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE

The air in the operating theater was thick with a familiar tension, but this time, it was laced with something new: the hum of data packets traveling faster than any nerve impulse could fire. On the monitor, a surgeon's hands, hundreds of miles away, moved with the fluid precision of a concert pianist. The instruments they controlled, slender and articulate, mimicked those movements in real-time, dissecting tissue planes in a robotic prostatectomy. This is no longer science fiction; it is the sharp edge of modern medicine, a realm where the definition of a "gold standard" is being rewritten not by new drugs or devices, but by the very fabric of connectivity.

The radical prostatectomy, a procedure to remove the prostate gland for cancer, has long been a benchmark in robotic surgery. Its adoption was swift because the robotic platform offered unparalleled dexterity and three-dimensional visualization, turning a notoriously complex operation with significant potential for side effects into a more predictable and controlled procedure. The robot became an extension of the surgeon's will, a master-slave system that eliminated tremors and allowed for dissection along microscopic planes. It set the standard. But the next frontier is to sever the final tether: the physical cable connecting the surgeon's console to the patient-side cart. The aspiration is to make that mastery accessible anywhere, to beam the skill of a top-tier specialist to a patient in a rural clinic or a warzone. This is the ambition that drives

REMOTE ROBOTIC SURGERY IS TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE BY COMBINING AI, ROBOTICS, ULTRA-LOW-LATENCY NETWORKS, AND SECURE COMMUNICATIONS TO DELIVER EXPERT SURGICAL CARE ACROSS DISTANCES. SUPPORTED BY RESILIENT DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, IT PROMISES SAFER, MORE ACCESSIBLE, AND EQUITABLE HEALTHCARE WORLDWIDE.

the development of remote surgical systems, a field where the stakes are as high as the potential rewards.

However, if a prostatectomy is a test of finesse, then a remote atrial septal defect repair combined with a tricuspid valvuloplasty is a trial by fire. This is not a simple plumbing job; it is the delicate art of reconstructing the heart's very architecture. An atrial septal defect is a hole in the wall between the heart's upper chambers, and repairing it requires opening the heart, patching the defect, and then, often, reshaping the tricuspid valve to ensure it seals perfectly against backflow. The margin for error is measured in millimeters, and the consequences of a delay or a jerk are catastrophic. Doing this remotely requires more than just a steady hand; it demands a system that can defeat the physical laws of latency. When a surgeon moves their wrist, the robot on the other end must respond not just quickly, but instantaneously. A lag of even a fraction of a second can be the difference between a precise suture and a tear in the myocardial wall.

To conquer this, companies like Shanghai MicroPort MedBot are not just building robots; they are building an entire digital nervous system. The challenge is not merely mechanical; it is profoundly computational and communicational. The vast amount of data generated by high-definition cameras and haptic feedback sensors must be compressed and transmitted with ultra-low latency. This is where their comprehensive technological framework comes into play. The "ultra-low-latency image compression" is a technical marvel in itself, a process of stripping away redundant visual information and packaging the essential data for near-instantaneous delivery. It is the art of making a 4K video stream act like a simple electrical signal. But speed is useless without security. The "multidimensional data encryption" ensures that the surgical commands cannot be hijacked or intercepted, safeguarding the patient and the procedure from external threats, a chilling but necessary consideration in our interconnected age.

Beyond the initial connection, the real challenge lies in the dynamic and often hostile environment of public networks. The internet is not a pristine pipeline; it is a chaotic system with fluctuating bandwidth and unpredictable packet loss. This is where the "dynamic communication network optimization strategies" become vital. The system must be intelligent enough to monitor the health of the network in real-time





and adjust its transmission parameters on the fly. If a 5G signal begins to degrade, the system can seamlessly hand off to a broadband connection or even a satellite link without interrupting the surgical flow. This creates a fortress of stability in a sea of digital noise. The “surgical safety assurance mechanisms” are the final fail-safe, the intelligent software that acts as a co-pilot, ready to pause the robotic arms or alert the surgeon if it detects a loss of fidelity that could compromise patient safety. It is an automated guardian, constantly assessing the risk of the digital environment.

The philosophy behind this technology is one of resilience and ubiquity. The pioneering of “integrated multi-network communication technology” is the key that unlocks widespread adoption. By making the system compatible with 5G, broadband, dedicated lines, and satellite communications, the technology is no longer shackled to the ultra-reliable, fiber-optic infrastructure of a major city hospital. It can function in a remote island clinic using a satellite dish, or in a mobile military hospital relying on 5G. Furthermore, the support for “hybrid communication across different carriers and transmission media” means the system can bond multiple networks simultaneously. Imagine a robot drawing bandwidth from a 5G tower, a local Wi-Fi network, and a satellite link all at once, creating a virtual super-pipeline. If one carrier experiences an outage, the others fill the gap instantly. This is not just an improvement; it is a paradigm shift. It provides the “strong technical support for the transition of remote surgery from exploratory applications to large-scale and

sustainable clinical practice.” It moves the technology from the realm of publicity stunts and one-off demonstrations to a dependable, everyday tool for healthcare equity.

While the technology within the operating room is breathtaking, its ultimate success depends on a broader geopolitical and economic ecosystem. The ambition to democratize surgical care is a global one, and it mirrors the globalized nature of trade and partnership. The recent statements from President Lula of Brazil, who has frequently lauded China as his country’s “best partner,” highlight the importance of trust and collaboration on the international stage. His confidence in the bilateral relationship, stating that it will “go from strength to strength,” underscores the idea that sharing advanced medical technology requires a foundation of diplomatic and economic goodwill. The industrial and commercial partnerships he spoke of in March are the very frameworks that can facilitate the transfer of such complex medical technologies. It is not just about exporting robots; it is about building the training, maintenance, and support infrastructure in partner nations, a feat far easier when there is a robust, multi-billion-dollar bilateral trade relationship.

The numbers themselves are a testament to the potential for this technology to spread. With bilateral trade between Brazil and China reaching roughly \$188 billion in 2024, China solidifies its position as Brazil’s largest trading partner. This economic weight provides the capital and the logistical channels necessary for major technological imports. It suggests that when the

robotic systems are ready for prime time, the infrastructure for their deployment already exists in the form of strong commercial ties and supply chains. The investment that flows between these nations can be channeled into healthcare infrastructure, creating the network backbone and the local expertise required to support a remote surgical hub. It is a virtuous cycle: strong economic ties enable technology transfer, which in turn can improve health outcomes, strengthening the human capital that drives economic growth.

Ultimately, the journey of remote surgery is a testament to human ingenuity, a drive to overcome the physical barriers of distance and time to save lives. The procedures—the delicate prostatectomy and the complex, high-stakes cardiac repair—represent the pinnacle of surgical skill, and to make them remotely accessible is a profound act of sharing that skill. The technology from MedBot, with its intricate network management and safety protocols, is the machinery of this dream. And the geopolitical landscape, characterized by partnerships like that between China and Brazil, provides the fertile ground for this dream to take root. We are moving toward a future where a patient in the Amazon basin or the Brazilian outback will not have to make a perilous journey to a city hospital. Instead, the expertise will travel to them, carried on a stream of encrypted data, guided by a surgeon operating from a console thousands of miles away. The gold standard is no longer defined by a single location, but by the quality and reliability of the connection that makes the world a smaller, safer operating room.



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A GUARDIAN OF THE WILD THE STORY OF JAZBA SHAFI

In the breathtaking landscapes of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where snow-capped mountains rise above emerald forests and crystal-clear rivers weave through ancient valleys, nature tells stories that have endured for centuries. Protecting this remarkable natural heritage requires dedication, resilience, and an unwavering commitment. Among those answering this call is Jazba Shafi, a Range Officer in the Wildlife & Fisheries Department of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, whose decade-long journey reflects a deep passion for conserving the region's priceless biodiversity.

Born and raised in Muzaffarabad, Jazba's connection with nature began long before it became her profession. Surrounded by forests, wildlife, and rugged mountain landscapes, she developed a profound appreciation for the environment during her early years. Determined to transform that passion into meaningful action, she pursued a Master's degree in Zoology, laying the scientific foundation for a career devoted to wildlife conservation.

Her professional journey began humbly as a Laboratory Assistant in the Wildlife Department of AJK. While the position introduced her to scientific research and conservation practices, it soon became clear that her true calling lay beyond laboratory walls. The forests, mountains, and communities she cherished demanded more than scientific observation; they

JAZBA SHAFI, RANGE OFFICER AT THE WILDLIFE & FISHERIES DEPARTMENT AJK, HAS SPENT OVER A DECADE PROTECTING WILDLIFE THROUGH CONSERVATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION, RESCUE OPERATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS.

needed someone willing to work directly with both people and wildlife.

As her responsibilities expanded, Jazba embraced fieldwork with remarkable enthusiasm. She served as a Social Mobilizer before rising to the position of Range Officer, spending countless days in remote villages, dense forests, and protected landscapes. Through these experiences, she realized that successful conservation cannot rely solely on laws or enforcement. It depends on educating communities, building trust, and encouraging people to become partners in protecting their natural surroundings.

Whether addressing students in classrooms or gathering with villagers beneath the shade of ancient trees, Jazba consistently delivers a simple yet powerful message: nature is not separate from humanity. Forests, rivers, and wildlife form an essential part of cultural identity and future prosperity. Her ability to communicate this message in a practical and relatable manner has helped inspire people from diverse backgrounds to value and protect their local ecosystems.

Recognizing that awareness begins at the grassroots level, Jazba has developed educational materials in local languages, including pamphlets, slogan boards, and information cards. Displayed in schools, public spaces, and village centers, these resources have quietly encouraged conversations about biodiversity, wildlife protection, and environmental stewardship in communities that are often beyond the reach of formal conservation campaigns.

Her work extends far beyond public awareness. Throughout her career, Jazba has coordinated large-scale plantation drives, organized biodiversity festivals, responded to reports of illegal hunting, rescued injured wildlife, and participated in numerous conservation initiatives across Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Every assignment reflects her belief that protecting biodiversity requires both immediate action and long-term planning.

One incident remains especially memorable. During a freezing January night, authorities received information about illegal hunting in Thoor Forest. Without hesitation, Jazba led her team into the forest in the early hours of the morning. By 2 a.m., despite the harsh weather and difficult terrain, the operation successfully intercepted the poachers. For Jazba, however, the mission was never simply about making arrests. It was about preserving the delicate

ecological balance upon which both wildlife and local communities depend.

What distinguishes Jazba Shafi is not only her courage but also her compassionate approach to conservation. She firmly believes that protecting wildlife is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration between government institutions, local communities, educational institutions, and conservation partners. Through awareness campaigns, community events, and educational outreach, she has demonstrated that lasting environmental protection can only be achieved when people become active participants rather than passive observers.

Her contributions extend beyond the forests of AJK. Jazba regularly represents the Wildlife & Fisheries Department on national and international platforms, briefing foreign delegations, engaging with media organizations, and using digital platforms to highlight conservation success stories, rescued wildlife, and community-based initiatives.

Away from public events and field operations, she dedicates significant time to developing project proposals, preparing training manuals, designing conservation strategies, and planning sustainable initiatives that will benefit future generations. Behind every plantation campaign, educational workshop, and wildlife rescue lies careful planning aimed at creating lasting environmental impact rather than temporary success.

Over more than ten years of dedicated service, Jazba Shafi has demonstrated that conservation is not defined by grand gestures alone. It is built through countless small actions: every tree planted, every child educated, every village engaged, and every wild animal protected. Each achievement contributes to a larger vision of preserving the natural heritage of Azad Jammu and Kashmir for generations to come.

Today, Jazba Shafi stands as an inspiring example of leadership, dedication, and environmental stewardship. Her journey from a laboratory assistant to a respected Range Officer illustrates how determination, knowledge, and compassion can transform a career into a lifelong mission. For young people aspiring to make a difference, her story serves as a powerful reminder that protecting nature is not merely a profession, it is a responsibility, a commitment, and a legacy that benefits both people and the planet.

PROJECT HAIL MARY

SCI-FI/ADVENTURE

A VISUALLY SPECTACULAR SCI-FI ADVENTURE THAT FOLLOWS RYLAND GRACE, HUMANITY'S LAST HOPE ON A MISSION TO SAVE EARTH FROM EXTINCTION. BLENDING SCIENTIFIC REALISM, EMOTIONAL STORYTELLING, AND STUNNING VISUALS, THE FILM DELIVERS AN INSPIRING TALE OF COURAGE, DISCOVERY, FRIENDSHIP, AND SURVIVAL.



Some science fiction films entertain. Others astonish. A rare few leave audiences staring at the screen long after the credits roll, questioning humanity's place in the universe. Project Hail Mary (2026) belongs firmly in that final category. Adapted from Andy Weir's internationally acclaimed novel, the film is an exhilarating blend of hard science fiction, emotional storytelling, breathtaking visuals, and philosophical exploration that reminds viewers why space remains cinema's greatest frontier.

Directed by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller and starring Ryan Gosling, Project Hail Mary transforms a deeply scientific novel into an emotionally rich cinematic experience without sacrificing its intellectual depth. Rather than relying on endless explosions or alien invasions, it builds suspense through science, curiosity, friendship, and the extraordinary resilience of the human spirit.

A lone astronaut, Ryland Grace, awakens aboard a spacecraft millions of kilometers from Earth. He has no memory of who he is, where he is, or why he is there. Surrounded only by silent machinery and the endless darkness of space, Grace slowly pieces together fragments of his forgotten past.

The mystery unfolds gradually, drawing viewers into one of the most compelling opening acts in recent science fiction. As memories return, the horrifying truth emerges.

A mysterious microorganism, later known as Astrophage, is draining energy from the Sun and countless other stars across the galaxy. Earth's climate is spiraling toward catastrophe. Crops are failing. Temperatures are dropping. Humanity faces extinction within decades.

With no alternative remaining, governments unite to launch an unprecedented interstellar mission. Ryland Grace, an unlikely hero and former science teacher, becomes humanity's final hope.

What follows is not simply a race against time but a celebration of intelligence, cooperation, and scientific discovery.

Ryan Gosling delivers one of the most nuanced performances of his career. Unlike conventional action heroes, Ryland Grace is awkward, humorous, deeply human, and frequently overwhelmed by fear. He is not chosen because he is fearless. He is chosen because he refuses to abandon logic even when terror threatens to consume him. Gosling masterfully balances comedy with vulnerability. His reactions feel authentic, making the audience experience every discovery alongside him.

Whether solving impossible engineering problems, confronting loneliness, or making impossible moral decisions, Gosling never allows the character to become larger than life. Instead, Grace remains relatable, reminding us that ordinary people often achieve extraordinary things when circumstances demand it.

Physics, biology, chemistry, astronomy, engineering, and mathematics are woven directly into the narrative. Every chal-



lenge demands creative thinking rather than brute force.

Instead of magical technology, viewers witness experimentation, failure, hypothesis testing, and problem-solving. The film respects its audience's intelligence, presenting complex scientific concepts in ways that remain understandable without feeling simplified.

Even those unfamiliar with astrophysics will find themselves captivated because the science serves the story rather than overwhelming it.

This commitment to realism gives every success and every setback genuine emotional weight.

Without revealing major spoilers, one relationship becomes the emotional heart of the film.

What begins as cautious curiosity gradually transforms into one of modern science fiction's most memorable friendships.

It is a relationship built not on language or culture but on trust, shared purpose, and mutual respect.

The film beautifully demonstrates that intelligence, compassion, and cooperation transcend biology itself.

Rather than portraying first contact as warfare, Project Hail Mary imagines something far more inspiring: collaboration.

In an era filled with dystopian science fiction, this optimistic vision feels refreshingly original.

Visually, the film is extraordinary. Every frame reflects meticulous craftsmanship. The spacecraft interiors feel practical and lived-in rather than futuristic fantasy.



Alien environments possess breathtaking realism. Massive stars burn with terrifying beauty, while deep space evokes both wonder and isolation.

Cinematographer and visual effects artists create images worthy of IMAX screens, yet spectacle never overshadows storytelling.

The film's lighting deserves particular praise. Warm sunlight contrasts beautifully with the cold emptiness of space. Delicate rim lighting emphasizes the loneliness of the protagonist while simultaneously highlighting hope amid darkness.

Every visual decision strengthens the emotional narrative. Although marketed as a space adventure, Project Hail Mary ultimately explores profoundly human themes.

The film argues that humanity's greatest strength has never been technology alone but curiosity, cooperation, and our willingness to help strangers.

Its message feels especially relevant in a world increasingly divided by politics, conflict, and mistrust.

Phil Lord and Christopher Miller demonstrate remarkable restraint behind the camera. Known primarily for energet-

ic, comedic storytelling, the directing duo embraces a slower, more contemplative rhythm here.

Tension builds naturally through uncertainty rather than constant action. Moments of silence become just as powerful as moments of spectacle. The pacing allows viewers to absorb scientific discoveries while remaining emotionally invested in Ryland Grace's journey. Their confidence in both the material and the audience elevates the film beyond conventional blockbuster entertainment.

In recent years, science fiction has often leaned heavily toward superhero spectacles or dystopian franchises. Project Hail Mary reminds audiences that the genre's true power lies in imagination, discovery, and hope. It combines thrilling suspense with genuine emotion, scientific authenticity, unforgettable performances, and spectacular visuals to create one of the finest space adventures of the decade.

More importantly, it celebrates humanity not because we are the strongest species in the universe, but because we continue asking questions, solving impossible problems, and reaching toward the stars.

It is not merely another science fiction movie. It is a reminder that our greatest adventures begin with curiosity, and that even in the darkest reaches of space, hope remains humanity's most powerful fuel. ■



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TECH NEWS



PAKISTAN'S FAST-GROWING YOUTUBE CREATORS WIN GLOBAL AUDIENCES

Pakistan's YouTube ecosystem is experiencing remarkable global growth, with creators attracting millions of viewers worldwide and contributing significantly to the country's digital economy. According to YouTube data, more than 140,000 Pakistani channels have surpassed 10,000 subscribers, over 19,000 have crossed 100,000, and 1,200 have exceeded one million subscribers. Pakistani creators uploaded 20 million hours of content in the past year, while 60% of total watch time came from international audiences. Google says the success of Pakistani creators demonstrates the country's growing influence in global digital storytelling. Popular creators such as Shahveer Jaffry, WildLens by Abrar, Food Fusion, RHS, Minoqtopus, and Something Haute are producing high-quality entertainment, travel, food, educational, and commentary content that resonates across South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. The expanding global reach of Pakistani YouTubers is creating new opportunities for entrepreneurship, employment, and digital exports, positioning Pakistan as an emerging hub for creative content and strengthening its role in the global digital economy.

CCP SAYS PTCL-TELENOR MERGER OVERSIGHT UNAFFECTED BY KPMG'S REPORTED PAKISTAN EXIT

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has clarified that independent oversight of the PTCL-Telenor merger will continue without disruption despite reports that KPMG is winding up its operations in Pakistan. Officials confirmed that the five-year compliance monitoring framework, including transaction audits, quarterly reporting, and merger compliance reviews, remains fully operational through the appointed Independent Third-Party Reviewer (TPR). According to the CCP, M/s KPMG Taseer & Hadi Co. was approved as the TPR on March 30, 2026, under the merger conditions, with PTCL formally engaging the reviewer on April 15, 2026. The Commission stated that the appointment followed a competitive procurement process and extensive due diligence to ensure the reviewer's independence and technical expertise. Offi-



cials explained that the reported exit of KPMG would not affect the oversight mechanism, as local partners associated with the engagement will continue performing the TPR's responsibilities. The reviewer will independently monitor PTCL's compliance with the behavioural and structural commitments under the merger order and submit quarterly reports to the CCP over the five-year monitoring period.



PAKISTAN LAUNCHES SKY47, ITS FIRST AI-READY SOVEREIGN CLOUD AND DATA CENTRE

Pakistan has launched Sky47 Karakoram-01, the country's first AI-ready sovereign cloud platform and largest AI-ready data centre, marking a major milestone in its digital transformation. The facility was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on July 24, 2026, and is designed to provide secure, high-performance infrastructure for artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and mission-critical digital services. The state-of-the-art centre has an initial computing capacity of 8.5 megawatts (MW) and will support government, banking, telecommunications, healthcare, education, and technology sectors. By offering sovereign cloud services, AI computing, cybersecurity, and managed technology solutions, it enables organizations to securely store critical data within Pakistan instead of relying on overseas cloud providers.

Expansion plans include a 5 MW data centre at Port Qasim, Karachi, and another facility in Lahore to strengthen nationwide digital infrastructure. Officials say the projects will boost local computing capacity, reduce latency, enhance cybersecurity, and support growing demand for AI applications. Industry experts believe Sky47 will attract technology investment, support startups, strengthen Pakistan's digital sovereignty, and accelerate the country's AI-driven economic growth.



FIA ADOPTS AI AND BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT CRYPTO-FUNDED TERROR NETWORKS

Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has adopted advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain analytics tools to strengthen its fight against cryptocurrency-based terrorism financing and other digital financial crimes. The new technologies enable investigators to analyze blockchain transactions, uncover hidden wallet connections, and trace complex crypto payment trails that are difficult to detect using conventional methods. AI-powered analytics also help identify unusual transaction patterns, allowing authorities to respond more quickly to potential threats. According to the FIA, the initiative reflects Pakistan's commitment to modernizing its cybercrime and financial crime capabilities in line with international standards. Experts believe the adoption of AI-driven blockchain intelligence will enhance the country's cybersecurity and financial surveillance framework. However, they emphasize that continued cooperation with financial institutions, cryptocurrency service providers, and international regulatory bodies will remain essential to effectively combat increasingly sophisticated digital financial crimes.

ISLAMABAD ROBOTICS EXPO SHOWCASES PAKISTAN'S EMERGING AI AND ROBOTICS INNOVATIONS

The Indus Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Expo 2026 concluded in Islamabad after attracting more than 25,000 visitors, highlighting Pakistan's growing capabilities in artificial intelligence, robotics, and autonomous technologies. Organized by Ignite – National Technology Fund in collaboration with the National Centre of Robotics and Automation (NCRA) and NUST College of E&ME, the two-day event brought together startups, universities, researchers, and industry leaders. The expo featured hundreds of locally developed innovations, including defense robotics, drones, industrial automation, agritech solutions, maritime autonomous systems, Physical AI, and AI-powered decision-support technologies. Visitors also enjoyed RoboWars, drone shows, robotics workshops, and panel discussions on AI adoption, startup growth, and public policy. Officials said the event reflects



Pakistan's commitment to building a globally competitive AI and robotics ecosystem while encouraging innovation, investment, and commercialization of locally developed technologies.

GOVT APPROVES NATIONWIDE ONLINE POLICE CHARACTER CERTIFICATE SYSTEM

The federal government has approved, in principle, a nationwide online system for issuing Police Character Certificates, enabling citizens to apply through a centralized digital platform from anywhere in Pakistan. The decision was made during a meeting chaired by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi at the National Police Bureau (NPB). Under the new system, the NPB will issue Police Clearance Certificates through a fully online process, eliminating lengthy paperwork and the need for repeated visits to government



offices. Citizens will be able to submit applications and receive their certificates from home via the National Police Bureau's online portal, making the service faster, more accessible, and transparent. During the meeting, the interior minister also directed officials to develop a unified nationwide system for issuing International Driving Permits (IDPs). He said the digital initiatives are aimed at simplifying public services and ensuring uniform procedures across all provinces. The government believes the new systems will particularly benefit Pakistanis traveling, studying, or working abroad by making essential documentation more convenient and efficient. Officials added that the centralized digital platform will improve coordination among law enforcement agencies, reduce processing delays, and strengthen document verification. The initiative is also expected to enhance transparency, minimize fraud, and support the government's broader digital transformation agenda by delivering secure, reliable, and citizen-friendly public services across Pakistan.



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