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Leading the Next Era of Intelligent Transformation

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Director
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Department

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Waqar Naqvi

Director - Information Technologyy

HABIB UNIVERSITY

Leading the Next Era of Intelligent Transformation

Waqar Naqvi serves as Director, Information Technology at Habib University and is a distinguished Strategic IT Executive with over 20 years of experience in ICT leadership, governance, and digital transformation. Recognized for aligning technology vision with institutional strategy, he has successfully led multi-million-dollar infrastructure initiatives, enterprise modernization programs, and ROI-driven transformation projects that enhance operational excellence, resilience, and long-term sustainability.

With deep expertise spanning AI, automation, cloud adoption, enterprise architecture, cybersecurity, analytics, and technology governance, Waqar continues to drive innovation and institutional growth through data-driven decision-making and strategic leadership. His commitment to building high-performing teams, fostering organizational agility, and delivering transformative outcomes positions him among Pakistan's leading technology leaders in higher education and digital transformation.

Syed Ahsan

Founder & CEO
MasPearls | MerchantPaisa

MASPearls

Syed Ahsan is a visionary fintech entrepreneur and the Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Maspearls & MerchantPaisa. With extensive expertise in digital payments, regulated transaction processing, and financial technology innovation, he has played a key role in building scalable payment ecosystems across the USA and Middle East. His leadership spans payment gateways, digital wallets, card acquiring and issuing, BNPL solutions, POS infrastructure, and cross-border remittance platforms.

Driven by a passion for the future of financial services, Syed Ahsan is advancing AI-powered financial infrastructure, intelligent fraud prevention, embedded finance, and automation-led compliance frameworks. Through innovation and strategic leadership, he continues to strengthen financial inclusion, operational efficiency, and secure digital payment experiences for businesses and consumers worldwide.

Muhammad Ammar

Deputy General Manager – IT Design & Development

Muhammad Ammar is a seasoned enterprise technology leader with nearly two decades of experience in enterprise architecture, digital transformation, payment platforms, blockchain solutions, and AI-driven innovation. As Deputy General Manager – IT Design & Development at Pakistan State Oil (PSO), he plays a pivotal role in shaping technology strategies and building scalable digital ecosystems that drive business growth and operational excellence.

Having delivered mission-critical platforms across Pakistan, the Middle East, and Africa, Muhammad Ammar specializes in resilient technology architectures, enterprise systems, and strategic innovation. His expertise continues to help organizations accelerate digital transformation while maintaining reliability, security, and long-term sustainability.

Muhammad Aminuddin

Chief Executive Officer

TPL Insurance

Muhammad Aminuddin is the Chief Executive Officer of TPL Insurance and a distinguished leader in Pakistan's insurance and InsurTech sector. With more than 25 years of experience across banking, insurance, fintech, energy, commodities, and oil & gas, he has built a reputation for driving business growth, operational excellence, and digital transformation. Under his leadership, TPL Insurance has become Pakistan's largest retail insurer and a leading provider of Shariah-compliant Takaful solutions.

A visionary executive with a strong track record across global financial services, Muhammad Aminuddin continues to champion innovation, customer-centricity, and sustainable growth. His strategic leadership and commitment to transforming the insurance landscape have positioned TPL Insurance at the forefront of digital innovation and industry excellence.

Syed Abdul Salam

Chief Technology Officer

multinet
INFOSTRUCTURE FOR THE NATION

Syed Abdul Salam serves as Chief Technology Officer at Multinet Pakistan (Private) Limited and is a highly respected technology leader with extensive experience in telecommunications, cloud services, cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and enterprise technology transformation. Throughout his career, he has played a significant role in advancing innovation-driven solutions and strengthening Pakistan's ICT ecosystem through strategic leadership and technology excellence.

Recognized for his vision in digital transformation and infrastructure modernization, Syed Abdul Salam continues to drive initiatives that enhance connectivity, innovation, and operational performance. His expertise across core networks, cloud technologies, cybersecurity, AI-driven transformation, and emerging digital platforms positions him as a key contributor to the future of Pakistan's technology landscape.

Muhammad Suhail

Director and Co-founder

arcana DIGITAL NEXT

Muhammad Suhail is the Director and Co-founder of Arcana Info, bringing over three decades of experience in the information technology industry. Having started his technology career in 1990, he played a significant role in the growth of Pakistan's IT sector through leadership positions at CMC, IBM-related initiatives, and Techaccess. His extensive experience in business leadership, technology management, and strategic growth has made him a respected figure in the industry.

As Co-founder of Arcana Info, Muhammad Suhail has been instrumental in driving organizational growth, operational excellence, and innovation. Known for his strengths in strategic planning, team building, and business development, he continues to lead Arcana's evolution while helping organizations leverage technology to achieve sustainable success and long-term value.

Murad Syed

Managing Director & Co-Founder

tenx.

Murad Syed is the Managing Director & CoFounder of TenX, Agrilift and TASDEEQ.He is a recognized leader in artificial intelligence, data science, and digital innovation. With more than two decades of experience, he has dedicated his career to helping organizations harness data-driven technologies to accelerate digital transformation, improve decision-making, and unlock sustainable business growth.

At TenX, Murad leads global delivery and innovation initiatives, driving the development of advanced AI, analytics, and enterprise technology solutions across multiple industries. Known for his expertise in AI strategy, data engineering, and scalable technology platforms, he continues to empower organizations with intelligent solutions that create measurable business impact and long-term value.

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BRILLIANT MINDS NEED STRUCTURED ECOSYSTEMS

Over the last two weeks, I have had the privilege of sitting with founders, technologists, operators, and emerging companies through my engagement with NASTP Delta Lahore. The experience has been energizing, humbling, and deeply clarifying.

WRITTEN BY:

Zeeshan Sabri

Clarifier | Founder of Award-Winning ClarityOS™
Stabilization Before Optimization

What I have seen is very simple:

- Pakistan does not lack brilliance.
- The ideas are real.
- The technical depth is real.
- The ambition is real.
- The founder energy is real.
- The problem-solving instinct is real.

Across fintech, AI, healthtech, cyber, circular commerce, education, energy, publishing, smart infrastructure, digital platforms, enterprise software, and emerging technology, I have met people building solutions around real problems — not theoretical ones.

Some are rethinking financial access and digital banking for the next generation — like the team building a wallet-first fintech targeting Gen Z and Gen Alpha, using open banking frameworks to serve the 70% of Pakistan that remains unbanked.

Some are rethinking trade-in models, circular commerce, and device lifecycle economics — with plans already underway to expand into Egypt, Saudi, and the UAE.
Some are building AI-enabled platforms for enterprises, education, health, compliance, and customer engagement.

Some are creating digital public goods for freelancers — global dollar accounts, instant PKR payouts at a fraction of industry rates — built by teams operating across Dubai, Taiwan, and Pakistan.

Some are working in the publishing sector, quietly serving millions of students across O and A levels, with a steady business that has grown over years without fanfare.

And some are exploring national-scale opportunities in infrastructure, cybersecurity, smart systems, and institutional transformation.

And yet, after these conversations, one observation stands above all others:

Innovation does not scale because it is brilliant. It scales when it becomes structured.

That is a lesson I have seen repeatedly across my own professional journey.
From early work with national telecom operators, to large-scale network transformation, strategic sourcing, procurement governance, data center delivery, API platform launches, digital banking enablement, regional technology initiatives, and institutional transformation across the GCC and Pakistan — the pattern has remained consistent.

Technology alone is never enough.

- A strong product needs positioning.
- A founder needs clarity.
- A company needs credibility.
- An idea needs an ecosystem.
- A market opportunity needs sequencing.
- Innovation needs institutional pathways.

This is where serious incubation becomes much more than office space.
A national-level incubation environment is not simply a building. It is not only a desk, a room, a floor, or a facility.

At its best, it is a system of confidence.

- It gives founders proximity to other companies
- It gives them access to institutional stakeholders
- It gives them exposure to regulatory pathways
- It gives them commercial credibility

It gives them talent pipelines, shared infrastructure, and a disciplined environment where ideas can mature into executable ventures.

For many emerging companies, the challenge is not capability.

- The challenge is isolation
- They are building, but not always positioned
- They are moving, but not always sequenced
- They are technically strong, but not always institutionally ready
- They have ambition, but not always the bridge into scale

That bridge matters.

I have seen this play out in a recent conversation that stayed with me.
A founder was describing how well his solution worked in his home city. The product was solid. The team was sharp. The market fit was real. He looked at the opportunity and said, "I can get all this in my city."

I asked him, "Then why don't you do that?"
His answer was simple and honest: "We don't have you there."
A matter of a few conversations. A few telephone calls. A first meeting. And that was the bridge.

That is what a structured ecosystem provides. Not just an introduction, but the person who has walked both worlds, who knows the culture, the trust rhythms, the regulatory landscape, and the right doors on both sides.

In the last two weeks, I have seen how quickly a founder conversation changes when the discussion moves from:

"What do you do?"
to:

1. Where do you fit?
2. Who needs this?
3. Which ecosystem can accelerate you?
4. What institutional advantage can support your growth?
5. What regulatory, commercial, or strategic pathway should you align with?
6. What should you do next?

That is where clarity begins.

And this, to me, is the next layer of national innovation infrastructure.
Not only roads, towers, networks, exchanges, data centers, and platforms.

But institutional infrastructure.

- The infrastructure of trust
- The infrastructure of governance
- The infrastructure of founder readiness
- The infrastructure of ecosystem access
- The infrastructure of structured opportunity

Because brilliant founders do not need more noise.

- They need clearer pathways
- They do not only need motivation
- They need positioning
- They do not only need introductions
- They need alignment
- They do not only need capital

They need credibility, discipline, structure, and the right environment to mature.
This is why national-level incubation matters.

Because when innovation is brought into the right structure, it stops being scattered potential and starts becoming an executable national capability.

I have seen this same principle across different stages of my own journey.

In telecommunications, scale was not created by equipment alone. It required planning, sourcing, integration, governance, rollout discipline, and operational resilience.

In data centers, uptime was not achieved by infrastructure alone. It required standards, process discipline, engineering clarity, and execution control.

In API platforms and digital banking, services did not become national rails simply because the technology existed. They required ecosystem readiness, stakeholder alignment, compliance, trust, adoption pathways, and sequencing.

In procurement and strategic sourcing, value was not unlocked by vendor selection alone. It required governance, clarity of requirement, negotiation discipline, commercial control, and institutional accountability.

The same is true for startups.
A founder may have a brilliant product.
A startup may have real technical depth.
A platform may solve a serious market pain point.

But without structure, the opportunity remains fragile.
Without positioning, the market may not understand it.
Without governance, institutions may hesitate.
Without ecosystem access, growth becomes slow and expensive.
Without sequencing, energy gets diluted.
Without clarity, even brilliance can remain under-leveraged.

That is why I believe the next phase of innovation will not be won by ideas alone.
It will be won by the ability to structure ideas into trusted, scalable, institutionally aligned ventures.

This is especially important in Pakistan.

- There is no shortage of talent
- There is no shortage of ambition
- There is no shortage of young people willing to build
- There is no shortage of founders who can see problems clearly and are willing to solve them

What is needed now is a stronger bridge between innovation and execution.

A bridge between founders and institutions.

- Between products and markets.
- Between startups and regulatory pathways.
- Between talent and opportunity.
- Between national infrastructure and private-sector creativity.
- Between ambition and disciplined scale.
- Between the founder who can build a solution in Karachi and the market that needs it in Riyadh or Muscat.

This is the work that excites me.

Because after years of working across national-scale technology environments — and spending the last two weeks inside one of the most ambitious innovation ecosystems in the region
I increasingly see startup incubation as the next infrastructure layer.
Not infrastructure in the traditional physical sense alone.

But institutional infrastructure.

- The layer that helps brilliance become visible
- he layer that helps companies become credible
- The layer that helps founders become ready
- The layer that helps ecosystems become intentional
- The layer that helps national innovation become executable

My current work in this space is reinforcing something I have believed for a long time:

Clarity is not a soft concept. It is an operating advantage.

When founders gain clarity, they move faster.
When institutions gain clarity, they support better.
When ecosystems gain clarity, they scale with purpose.
And when a country egins to structure its innovation layer properly, brilliance becomes more than inspiration.

It becomes capacity.
That is the opportunity in front of us.
Pakistan's innovation story is not waiting to be invented.
It is already here.
It is sitting in founder meetings.
It is being built in small teams.

It is emerging from universities, labs, offices, incubators, and technology parks.
It is visible in fintech, AI, healthtech, edtech, cyber, energy, automation, infrastructure, and enterprise platforms.
It is visible in the confidence of people who are building despite constraints.

The real task now is to structure it.

- To give it pathways
- To give it credibility
- To give it governance
- To give it ecosystem access
- To give it the institutional confidence required to scale

Because the future will not be built by brilliance alone.

It will be built by brilliance that has been clarified, structured, and made executable.

THE RISE OF BORDERLESS COMPANIES:
Why Geography Matters Less Than Execution

WRITTEN BY:

Muhammad Nabeel Shamim
Founder & CEO
DigiReps

For most of modern business history, geography was destiny. A company's success was often tied to its location, proximity to talent,access to capital,manufacturing capabilities, and physical presence in key markets. The world's most valuable businesses were built around geographic advantages that competitors simply could not replicate. Today, that reality is rapidly changing.

Technology, remote work, cloud infrastructure, digital payments, and global connectivity have fundamentally altered how companies are built and scaled. Increasingly, the organizations gaining the greatest competitive advantage are not those with the best location, but those with the best execution.

We are witnessing the rise of the borderless company.

The End of Geographic Constraints

Not long ago, a company seeking top talent had little choice but to hire within commuting distance of its office. Expansion into new markets often required significant capital investment, physical infrastructure, and local operational teams. Today, a growing number of businesses operate with clients, employees, contractors, partners, and suppliers spread across multiple countries and continents. A product may be designed in one country, developed in another, marketed globally, and supported around the clock by teams distributed across several time zones. The barriers that once limited growth have become increasingly irrelevant. The result is a business environment where access to opportunity is no longer reserved for organizations located in traditional economic centers.

Execution Has Become the New Competitive Advantage

As access to technology becomes more democratized, competitive advantages that once differentiated companies are becoming increasingly available to everyone

The organizations that win are those that can make decisions faster, adapt more quickly, attract the right talent, and consistently deliver value to customers.

In other words, success is becoming less about where a company is located and more about how effectively it operates.

The Global Talent Revolution

One of the most significant drivers of the borderless company is the transformation of talent acquisition.

Organizations are no longer restricted to hiring within a specific city or country. Instead, they can assemble teams based on skills, expertise, and cultural alignment regardless of location

This shift creates enormous opportunities. Companies gain access to broader talent pools.

Professionals gain access to global opportunities. Entire regions that were once overlooked are now participating directly in the global economy. The conversation is no longer about outsourcing. It is about optimization. Forward-thinking leaders are building teams around capability rather than geography. Having built businesses across both Pakistan and the United States, including DigiReps and Prodigy Solutions, one lesson has consistently stood out to me: clients rarely care where talent is located. They care about whether commitments are met, problems are solved, and value is delivered.

Over the years, I have seen globally distributed teams outperform traditional location-based models, not because geography became irrelevant, but because execution became far more important. That shift is at the heart of the borderless company.

Leadership in a Borderless World

While technology has made borderless organizations possible, leadership determines whether they succeed. Managing distributed teams requires a different mindset than managing traditional organizations.

Communication becomes more intentional. Processes become more scalable. Culture becomes something that must be actively designed rather than passively inherited.

The strongest borderless companies understand that trust and alignment cannot depend on physical proximity. They must be built into the operating model itself.

The New Opportunity for Emerging Markets

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the borderless company is the opportunity it creates for entrepreneurs and professionals in emerging markets. Historically, access to global business opportunities was concentrated in a handful of major
economic hubs.

Today, a talented entrepreneur with internet access, strong execution capabilities, and a global mindset can build globally competitive businesses from virtually anywhere in the world.
This shift is not only transforming businesses. It is transforming economic opportunity itself.

Talent that was once limited by geography is increasingly competing on a global stage.

Looking Ahead

The companies that define the next decade will not necessarily be the ones with the largest headquarters, the most prestigious addresses, or the biggest physical footprints.

They will be the organizations that build systems capable of attracting talent globally, serving customers efficiently, and executing consistently across borders.

The future belongs to businesses that can move faster than geography.
The rise of borderless companies is not simply a trend driven by technology or remote work. It represents a fundamental shift in how organizations create value and compete.

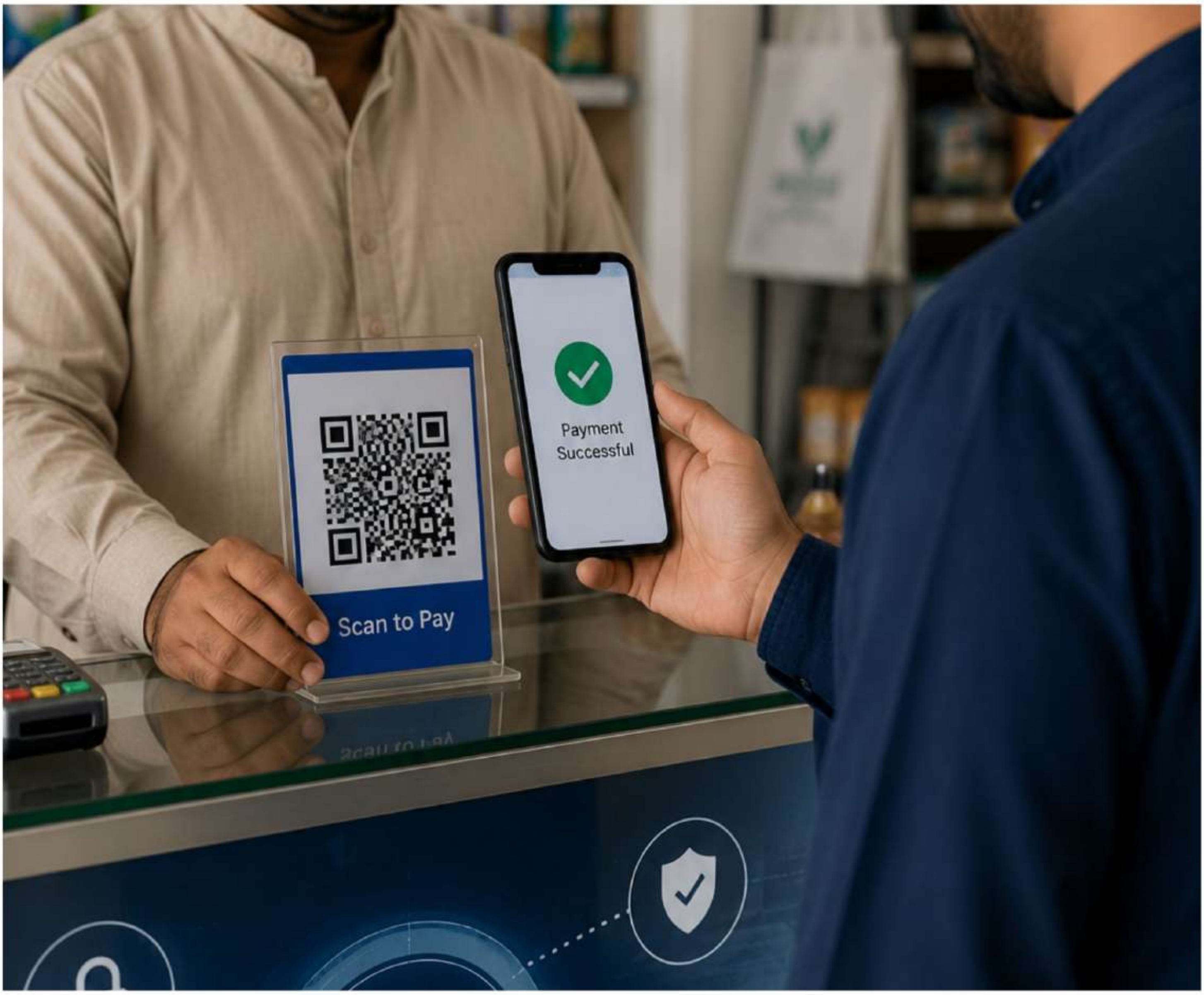
In a world where talent, tools, and opportunities are increasingly distributed, execution is becomingthe ultimate competitive advantage.

And for the leaders who recognize this shift early, the possibilities are truly global.

SECURE DIGITAL PAYMENTS AND THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPERATIVE.

Pakistan's fintech revolution is gathering speed, but security and inclusion must keep pace.

WRITTEN BY:
Muhammad Irfan Sheikh
Director Information & Cyber Security
Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)



Pakistan is at a watershed moment in its financial history. With 88 per cent of retail transactions now processed digitally a figure that has since climbed to 92 per cent in the most recent quarter and a government deadline to fully digitise all federal, provincial, and local government payments by June 2026, the country is no longer debating whether to embrace digital finance. It is navigating, urgently, how to do so securely and equitably. The stakes extend far beyond convenience; they touch the foundations of socioeconomic development, financial inclusion, and national prosperity.

The Scale of the Shift

The numbers speak for themselves. Pakistan's digital payment infrastructure now supports 226 million accounts and 46 million RAAST IDs. Retail payments climbed to 9.1 billion transactions worth Rs612 trillion in FY2024-25 a year on year surge of 38 per cent in volume. Five new digital banks have received in principle approval to operate, and Mashreq Bank completed its digital launch in Pakistan in just 12 months, a process that typically takes five years elsewhere. The SBP had set targets to raise mobile app users from 95 million to 120 million and to double QR code accepting merchants from 0.9 million to 2 million; notably, mobile banking users have already crossed the 120 million mark, ahead of schedule. This is not incremental progress it is structural transformation.

The Socioeconomic Dividend

The promise of this shift, if harnessed correctly, is enormous. According to the UN backed Better Than Cash Alliance, nationwide digital payments adoption can boost GDP by seven per cent, create four million jobs, and generate $263 billion in deposits. Micro, small, and medium enterprises which represent over 90 per cent of Pakistan's businesses stand to gain the most: improved cash flows, reduced transaction costs, remote commerce capabilities, and easier access to credit. For a country where the informal economy dominates, formalisation through digital payments is not merely a fiscal lever; it is a pathway to systemic growth.

Perhaps more compelling is the gender dimension. Digital wallets are quietly reshaping financial power dynamics within Pakistani households. Women enrolled in the Benazir Income Support Programme now receive funds directly into their mobile accounts, giving them a documented financial identity often for the first time in their lives. Economists argue that closing the gender gap in financial participation could significantly boost national productivity. Expanding digital offerings to women customers alone, according to the Better Than Cash Alliance, represents a market opportunity exceeding $650 million.

The Security Imperative

Yet the promise of digital payments cannot be separated from the peril of insecure systems. Higher transaction volumes invite greater fraud exposure, and Pakistan is no exception. The SBP has introduced a bank liability framework, multifactor authentication, biometric verification, chip and PIN cards, and a two hour cooling off period for suspicious transactions all commendable steps. The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan has similarly mandated all regulated entities, from NBFCs to insurance companies and securities brokers, to adopt digital payment solutions including RAAST QR codes, signalling a top down commitment to systemic security. But regulation alone is insufficient. PCI DSS compliance, tokenisation of repeat payments, real time fraud detection, and dynamic transaction routing must become industry standard practices not afterthoughts bolted on after a breach. A single high profile fraud incident, left unaddressed, can erode the public trust that has taken years to build.

Consumer protection must be designed into the architecture of the system, not retrofitted after the damage is done.

The Uncomfortable Paradox

There is a structural paradox at the heart of Pakistan's digital story. Even as digital payments dominate retail transactions, currency in circulation has surged to approximately Rs10.9 trillion roughly 26 per cent of the total money supply. Digital payments and physical cash are, for now, advancing simultaneously. This reveals a deep disparity: urban, educated, and formally employed Pakistanis are embracing digital finance at pace, while large swathes of the rural population and the informal economy remain anchored to cash. Low financial literacy and persistent regulatory gaps continue to widen this divide.

Bridging it requires more than smartphone penetration. It demands interoperable, real time payment systems; a robust digital identity infrastructure built on NADRA's existing framework; reliable data governance; and above all, financial literacy campaigns that reach the last mile. An inclusive digital economy cannot be built by catering only to those already connected.

A Policy Roadmap

The path forward requires coordinated action. Consumer protection frameworks must hold financial institutions not just users accountable for fraud losses. Financial literacy programmes must be expanded in regional languages, targeting rural communities, women, and MSMEs. Merchant QR code registration must be simplified and subsidised for small businesses. National level fraud detection networks, supported by public private threat intelligence sharing, must become a priority. Digital products and outreach must be designed specifically for women in the informal economy. And regulatory coherence across the SBP, SECP, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority must be ensured to eliminate the jurisdictional grey areas that fintech operators currently exploit.

The Moment to Act

Pakistan's fintech market is projected to grow from $2.18 trillion in digital transaction value today to as much as $4.4 trillion by 2030 under an optimistic scenario. That trajectory is achievable but only if security, inclusion, and governance keep pace with growth. A digital payments ecosystem that is fast but fraudulent, or modern but exclusionary, will not deliver the socioeconomic transformation the country urgently needs.

June 2026 is in effect. That government deadline is not merely administrative it is a statement of national intent. The real test, however, will not be whether the infrastructure is built. It will be whether the millions still outside the formal financial system are carried along not left behind.

AI AND IOT IN PAKISTAN: DRIVING THE NEXT DIGITAL LEAP

WRITTEN BY:

Syed Junaid Ahmed

Senior Solution Architect

Octans Digital

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are redefining the global technology landscape, enabling organizations to transform data into strategic insights and operational excellence. The convergence of these technologies has emerged as a key driver of digital transformation, allowing businesses and governments to enhance efficiency, improve decision-making, and unlock new economic opportunities.

For Pakistan, AI and IoT represent more than technological innovation—they offer a pathway to accelerated economic growth, industrial modernization, and enhanced global competitiveness. As the country advances its digital transformation agenda, the adoption of AI-powered IoT solutions can play a pivotal role in addressing long-standing challenges across critical sectors, including agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, and urban development.

The Synergy Between AI and IoT

The Internet of Things enables the collection of real-time data through connected devices, sensors, and intelligent systems. Artificial Intelligence transforms this data into actionable intelligence by identifying patterns, predicting outcomes, and automating decision-making processes.

Together, AI and IoT create intelligent ecosystems capable of optimizing operations, improving resource utilization, reducing costs, and enhancing service delivery. This synergy is rapidly becoming a cornerstone of next-generation digital infrastructure worldwide.

Emerging Applications in Pakistan

Smart Agriculture

Agriculture remains a fundamental pillar of Pakistan's economy, contributing significantly to employment and national output. AI and IoT technologies can support precision agriculture through intelligent irrigation systems, soil monitoring, weather analysis, and crop health assessment.

By leveraging real-time field data and predictive analytics, farmers can improve crop productivity, optimize water consumption, and reduce operational costs while enhancing food security.

Healthcare Innovation

The healthcare sector presents significant opportunities for AI and IoT adoption. Remote patient monitoring systems, wearable health devices, and AI-assisted diagnostic platforms can improve healthcare accessibility, particularly in underserved and rural regions.

These technologies facilitate early disease detection, continuous patient monitoring, and data-driven clinical decision-making, ultimately improving healthcare outcomes and operational efficiency.

Industrial Automation and Manufacturing

Pakistan's manufacturing sector, particularly textiles and industrial production, can benefit substantially from AI-driven predictive maintenance and IoT-enabled asset monitoring. Connected sensors can continuously evaluate equipment performance, while AI algorithms identify potential failures before they occur. This proactive approach minimizes downtime, extends asset lifespan, and enhances overall productivity.

Smart Cities and Urban Development

Rapid urbanization is placing increasing pressure on city infrastructure and public services. AI and IoT can enable smarter urban management through intelligent traffic control systems, smart utility networks, automated parking solutions, and real-time environmental monitoring.
The implementation of smart city initiatives in major metropolitan centers such as Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad can significantly improve mobility, sustainability, and quality of life for citizens.

Logistics and Supply Chain Optimization

The logistics sector is increasingly adopting AI and IoT technologies to enhance visibility and operational performance. Real-time fleet tracking, cold-chain monitoring, predictive route optimization, and automated inventory management are transforming supply chain operations. These capabilities improve reliability, reduce transportation costs, and enable businesses to respond more effectively to market demands.

Strategic Opportunities for Pakistan

Sector	AI and IoT Applications	Strategic Impact
Agriculture	Precision farming, smart irrigation, crop analytics	Increased productivity and resource efficiency
Healthcare	Remote monitoring, AI-assisted diagnostics	Improved healthcare access and patient outcomes
Manufacturing	Predictive maintenance, industrial automation	Higher efficiency and reduced operational costs
Smart Cities	Traffic management, smart utilities, public safety	Enhanced urban sustainability and service delivery
Logistics	Fleet management, cold-chain monitoring, route optimization	Greater supply chain resilience and efficiency

Key Challenges to Adoption

Despite the significant potential of AI and IoT, several challenges must be addressed to enable widespread adoption across Pakistan.

Infrastructure Readiness
Reliable digital infrastructure remains a prerequisite for large-scale IoT deployment. Expanding broadband connectivity, strengthening cloud capabilities, and accelerating next-generation network adoption will be essential for supporting connected ecosystems.

Data Privacy and Cybersecurity
As organizations collect and process increasing volumes of data, robust governance frameworks are required to ensure privacy, security, and regulatory compliance. Establishing clear standards for data protection will be critical to building public trust and encouraging investment.

Skills and Talent Development
The successful implementation of AI and IoT solutions depends on the availability of skilled professionals in data science, machine learning, cybersecurity, embedded systems, and cloud technologies. Strengthening educational programs and industry-led training initiatives should remain a national priority.

Investment and Innovation Ecosystem
While Pakistan's technology ecosystem continues to mature, greater investment is needed to support research, innovation, and commercialization of AI and IoT solutions. Increased collaboration between government, academia, investors, and industry stakeholders can accelerate technology adoption and scale local innovation.

A Roadmap for the Future

To fully realize the benefits of AI and IoT, Pakistan should focus on four strategic priorities:

1. Accelerate Pilot Programs – Implement high-impact projects in agriculture, healthcare, and manufacturing to demonstrate measurable business and societal value.
2. Strengthen Public-Private Collaboration – Foster partnerships between government institutions, technology providers, academia, and industry leaders to drive innovation and infrastructure development.
3. Develop a Future-Ready Workforce – Expand AI, data science, and IoT education through universities, vocational institutions, and professional training programs.
4. Promote Indigenous Innovation – Encourage startups and local technology firms to develop scalable solutions tailored to Pakistan's unique economic and operational challenges.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things are no longer emerging technologies; they are strategic enablers of economic growth, operational excellence, and national competitiveness. Their combined potential offers Pakistan a unique opportunity to modernize key industries, improve public services, and strengthen its position within the global digital economy.

The journey toward an intelligent and connected future will require sustained investment, progressive policy frameworks, and strong collaboration across public and private sectors. Organizations that embrace AI and IoT today will be better positioned to lead tomorrow's digital economy, while Pakistan as a whole stand to benefit from greater innovation, productivity, and sustainable growth.

The next digital leap is not a distant possibility—it is an opportunity that must be seized today.

TECHNOLOGY, LEADERSHIP, AND THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS

"The businesses that thrive are not always the largest—they are the ones that adapt the fastest, make informed decisions, and use technology to create value."

WRITTEN BY:

Adil Ali

Chief Executive Officer
TechSynergy Innovations & CodEnergy FZE

We are living in one of the most transformative periods in modern business history. The pace of technological advancement over the last few years has been unprecedented, reshaping industries, redefining customer expectations and changing the way organizations operate.

Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, Automation and Digital Transformation are no longer emerging trends. They have become critical business enablers. Organizations that once viewed technology as a support function are now realizing that technology sits at the core of strategy, growth and sustainability.

The most successful businesses today are not necessarily those with the largest budgets, the biggest teams or the longest market presence. They are the businesses that can adapt quickly, make informed decisions and leverage technology to create value for customers and stakeholders.

One of the biggest misconceptions in the corporate world is that digital transformation is simply about purchasing new software, upgrading infrastructure or moving workloads to the cloud. In reality, digital transformation is about changing mindsets. It is about creating a culture that embraces innovation, encourages continuous learning and remains agile in the face of change.

As business leaders, we must understand that technology is no longer solely the responsibility of IT departments. Every decision maker whether in finance, operations, sales, marketing, human resources or executive management must understand the strategic role technology plays in achieving organizational objectives.

The rise of Artificial Intelligence is a perfect example. AI is not here to replace businesses, it is here to transform them. Organizations that learn how to integrate AI into their operations will improve efficiency, enhance customer experiences, optimize decision making and unlock new growth opportunities. Those who ignore these changes risk becoming irrelevant in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Cybersecurity presents another important challenge. As organizations become more digital, the risks associated with cyber threats continue to grow. Protecting digital assets, customer information and business continuity is no longer optional. Cyber resilience must become a boardroom discussion rather than merely a technical discussion.

For countries like Pakistan, the opportunities are immense. We have a young population, a growing technology ecosystem and increasing digital adoption across industries. By investing in technology, innovation and skills development, Pakistani businesses can not only strengthen their local position but also compete on a regional and global scale.

However, technology alone is never the complete answer. Sustainable growth occurs when technology, people, processes and leadership work together toward a shared vision. Organizations that successfully align these elements will be the ones that lead the future.

The question facing business leaders today is not whether digital transformation is necessary.

The question is whether we are moving fast enough to remain relevant in a world that is changing every day.

The future will not belong to the biggest organizations.

The future will belong to those who are willing to adapt, innovate, and lead.

BEYOND TRADITIONAL PSPS:

The Rise of AI-Powered Payment Gateways and Merchant Platforms

WRITTEN BY:

Syed Ahsan
Founder & CEO
MasPearls Inc | MerchantPaisa

"From Payment Processing to Payment Intelligence: The AI Revolution in Merchant Platforms."

Payment gateways and PSPs were built to process transactions. Today, the market demands far moreautomation, visibility, speed, intelligence, and scalable operations.

While AI adoption in fintech has largely focused on customer experiences, one of the biggest opportunities lies within PSP operations. Many platforms still rely on manual processes for onboarding, reconciliation, settlements, routing, partner management, and support, creating unnecessary cost and complexity.

The next evolution of PSPs is not better payment processing; it is intelligent operational automation. AIpowered platforms can streamline workflows, improve efficiency, optimize performance, reduce costs, and enable PSPs to scale merchants, partners, and revenue without scaling operational overhead.

Why Traditional PSPs Are No Longer Enough

Traditional PSPs and payment gateways were built mainly for payment acceptance. Merchants now use multiple payment methods, multiple PSPs, multiple acquirers, and multiple channels. Many PSPs still operate with manual processes and disconnected systems. This creates several problemsthat include Slow reconciliation, multiple dashboards, poor visibility into settlements, delayed reporting, manual invoice creation, limited transaction search, high support costs and weak partner and ISO management The key challenge is that millions of merchants still rely on outdated payment platforms that are not designed for the modern payment ecosystem. AI can reduce repetitive work and improve every stage of payment operations.

The Rise of AI-Powered Payment Platforms

AI is changing the payment industry. Most companies focus only on fraud prevention. However, the biggest opportunity is using ai to automate payment operations. The future PSP will not only process transactions. It will help businesses: create payment links instantly, search transactions using simple language, reconcile settlements automatically, track merchant payouts, manage partner performance, predict delays and cashflow issues, improve approval rates, generate reports automatically and answer merchant questions instantly.

AI-Powered Merchant and Payment Operations

Merchants can generate payment links using natural language. The system auto-creates secure links with amount, description, customer details, expiry, QR code (if needed), multiple payment options (card, wallet, bank, POS, BNPL), and real-time status tracking.

Merchants can query transactions using simple prompts instead of filters, such as failed high-value transactions, refunds by region, card network activity, or chargebacks by date range.

AI-Powered Reconciliation and Settlement Management

Reconciliation remains a major operational challenge for PSPs and merchants due to fragmented transaction, settlement, payout, refund, chargeback, and banking data. AI automates matching across these sources, reducing manual effort, improving accuracy, accelerating settlement verification, identifying discrepancies faster, and providing greater visibility into balances and financial operations.

AI-powered settlement visibility enables merchants to instantly understand payout status, identify missing settlements, track pending transactions, and view deducted fees without manually reviewing reports or contacting support. This provides greater transparency, faster issue resolution, and improved control over cash flow.

AI-Powered Payment Orchestration

Payment orchestration is increasingly critical as large merchants operate across multiple banks, acquirers, PSPs, wallets, and BNPL providers. Instead of managing each integration separately, orchestration platforms centralize payment flows into a single system, while AI optimizes routing decisions in real time.

AI selects the optimal provider based on performance, cost, and success probability which results in higher approval rates, reduced transaction costs, fewer payment failures, improved customer experience, and reduced dependency on any single provider.

MerchantPaisa Vision

MerchantPaisa believes that the future of payments is not only about accepting payments. The future is about creating one intelligent platform where PSPs, merchants, partners, and support teams can manage everything in one place.

AI-Powered Support and Reporting

Many merchants rely on support teams for routine queries such as transaction declines, settlement timelines, refunds, and monthly fee breakdowns. AI systems can resolve these requests instantly by providing real-time, contextual answers without manual intervention.

AI can further forecast transaction outcomes, settlement delays, growth, seasonal sales trend, merchant churn risk and cashflow shortages and more.

AI for Partner and ISO Management

Payment companies operate across ISO agents, referral partners, sales teams, resellers, and distribution networks, creating fragmented relationship management and operational overhead. AI enables centralized partner tracking, commission forecasting, merchant quality scoring, inactive agent detection, risk identification in applications, and revenue analysis across partner channels.

MerchantPaisa is developing an AI-powered payment platform that integrates core PSP operations into a unified system. The platform includes smart payment links, AI-based transaction search, automated reconciliation, payment orchestration, partner management, merchant support automation, settlement tracking, and predictive reporting.

Data Privacy, Security and Future of payment platforms

AI-driven payment platforms must protect sensitive data including customer information, transactions, merchant records, settlements, and revenue data using strong encryption, access control, and monitoring. PSPs will evolve into full business operating systems, not just transaction processors. Early AI adoption will give providers a clear operational and competitive advantage

FUTURE OF ENERGY SECTOR IN PAKISTAN:

A CHOICE TO MAKE: ACCESSIBLE VS AFFORDABLE

WRITTEN BY:

Afsah Ahrar

Electrical Engineering Professional

Pakistan's energy story is changing in a way many people can feel in daily life. Not long ago, the biggest worry was whether electricity would be available. Now, the worry is often about whether it will be affordable and reliable. Pakistan has added a lot of power capacity over the years, and installed capacity has reached beyond 50-gigawatt range, but the system still struggles because plants are not always used efficiently and power does not always reach where it is needed. At the same time, electricity demand from the grid has shown signs of weakening, partly because high tariffs push homes and businesses to conserve or to look for alternatives like rooftop solar.

A big reason prices stay high is that Pakistan's power sector has a serious money problem that keeps coming back. This is often described as circular debt, which grows when distribution companies lose too much electricity, fail to collect bills, or depend on delayed subsidies. Even when official statements claim temporary improvements, the underlying message remains the same: without strong fixes in distribution and payments, the system can slip back into debt quickly and consumers end up paying the price.

While the power system struggles, a quieter change has been happening on rooftops. Distributed solar has grown extremely fast, mainly through net metering and similar arrangements. This growth is happening because people want control over their bills and want power that does not disappear when the grid is under stress. It also reflects the reality that solar is now one of the quickest options for new electricity supply, especially when households can install it without waiting for large projects.

But fast rooftop growth also creates new tensions. Pakistan's grid was built mostly for one-way power flow, from big plants to consumers, and now it has to manage two-way flows from thousands of small producers. As solar expanded, policymakers began to change the rules, including moving toward net billing and lowering the rate paid for exported solar electricity. This back and forth suggests that solar will stay important, but the rules will keep evolving as the government tries to balance consumer interest with grid stability and fair cost sharing.

If there is one place where Pakistan's future energy success will be won or lost, it is the grid. Pakistan does not only need more generation; it needs the ability to move low-cost electricity across long distances and deliver it reliably. Sector analysis has pointed to transmission bottlenecks that reduce the use of cheaper plants and increase reliance on more expensive options, which pushes up the overall cost of power. That is why transmission investment has become a central part of the energy conversation.

Fuel choices are also shifting, and this matters because Pakistan pays heavily for imported energy. Liquefied natural gas was once seen as a bridge fuel that could fill gaps left by declining domestic gas. But geopolitical conditions, high global prices and changing demand patterns have made LNG more complicated. Pakistan has shown a desire to reduce reliance on expensive imports and to adjust expensive contracts. Such rigid long-term LNG contracts can become a burden if grid demand drops and rooftop solar keeps expanding.

Hydropower remains one of Pakistan's biggest hopes for cheaper and cleaner electricity at scale. Large dams can produce power at low operating cost and can help stabilize the grid. Key projects like Dasu and Diamer-Bhasha often appear in policy discussions as vital long-term assets. Therefore hydro is expected to play a major role in a more affordable energy mix, especially if transmission improvements allow hydropower to reach the largest load centers.

Pakistan's transition will not be a simple switch from fossil fuels to renewables. Coal and nuclear are already part of the system and will remain present for years. Indigenous coal from Thar has been developed through large projects and expected to further expand as part of indigeneity. Nuclear power also holds a meaningful share in the electricity mix, and it is often treated as firm, low-carbon generation that supports stability when wind and solar output varies.

The likely direction is a layered system, where hydro and nuclear provide steady supply, wind and solar grow quickly because they are competitive, and gas is used more as a reserve or peak loading.

Policy signals suggest the government wants to move toward cheaper, more local, and more sustainable power, but also wants to avoid locking consumers into costly commitments. These policy initiatives matter because Pakistan's biggest public frustration today is not only outages, but the feeling that electricity has become too costly for households and too unpredictable for industry.

Looking ahead, Pakistan's energy future will depend less on announcing new megawatts and more on making the system work as a whole. That means modernizing transmission and distribution so cheaper power can travel where it is needed, tightening governance to reduce losses and improve recovery, and designing fair rules for rooftop solar so it supports the grid instead of destabilizing it. It also means handling imported fuels like LNG with more flexibility, so Pakistan is not trapped when prices rise or demand changes. If Pakistan can do these practical things, the next decade could bring a system that feels different to ordinary people: fewer surprises, more reliable service, and a cost that is easier to live with.

SMES: THE OPPORTUNITY BANKS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO IGNORE

WRITTEN BY:
Ahmer Ali
Entrepreneur I Director
CXDA Markets Limited

A Strategic Imperative for the Future of Banking

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are widely recognized as the backbone of modern economies. Yet despite their undeniable economic significance, many traditional financial institutions continue to overlook them as a distinct and highly valuable market segment. While conventional banks deliberate over transformation strategies, fintech firms, digital banks, and technology platforms are rapidly gaining ground by delivering innovative, agile, and customer-centric solutions tailored specifically to SME needs.

As highlighted by Sriranga Sampathkumar, Global Head of Sales at Infosys Finacle, financial institutions must move decisively if they intend to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive landscape. The opportunity is immense—but so is the risk of inaction.

Pakistan's SME Landscape: A Powerful Economic Force

In Pakistan, SMEs form the foundation of economic activity and entrepreneurship. According to the definitions adopted by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), enterprises are classified as follows:

Micro Enterprises

• Annual sales turnover up to PKR 30 million.

Small Enterprises

• Annual sales turnover between PKR 30 million and PKR 150 million.
• Up to 50 employees.

Medium Enterprises

• Up to 250 employees.
• Annual sales turnover up to PKR 250 million, subject to applicable capital and operational criteria.

The economic contribution of Pakistan's SME sector is substantial. SMEs account for approximately 40% of the country's GDP, employ over 80% of the non-agricultural workforce, and contribute nearly 30% of national exports. Despite their significance, however, many SMEs continue to face persistent challenges, including restricted access to formal financing, regulatory complexities, limited financial literacy, and structural inefficiencies.

To address these barriers, institutions such as SMEDA and the State Bank of Pakistan have introduced various policy frameworks, training initiatives, and financial inclusion programs aimed at strengthening the sector's growth and competitiveness.

The Most Underestimated Growth Engine

SMEs are far more than a niche market. They represent the overwhelming majority of businesses worldwide and serve as the principal drivers of employment, innovation, and economic resilience.

Across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, SMEs comprise nearly all registered businesses and employ the vast majority of private-sector workers. Globally, they account for over 90% of enterprises and generate more than half of all employment opportunities.

Yet many banks continue to approach SME banking through a traditional lens—treating these businesses either as scaled-up retail customers or scaled-down corporate clients. This approach fundamentally misunderstands the unique operating environment in which SMEs function.

Neither Retail Nor Corporate: A Distinct Banking Segment

SMEs occupy a complex middle ground that demands specialized financial solutions. Unlike individual consumers, they manage dynamic cash-flow cycles, supplier relationships, payroll obligations, inventory financing, and cross-border transactions. At the same time, they lack the dedicated treasury functions and financial resources available to large corporations.

Their requirements extend beyond basic banking products. SMEs increasingly demand:

- Integrated payment ecosystems
- Real-time cash-flow visibility
- Flexible financing solutions
- Digital onboarding capabilities
- Embedded financial services
- Automated compliance and reporting tools
- Seamless platform integrations

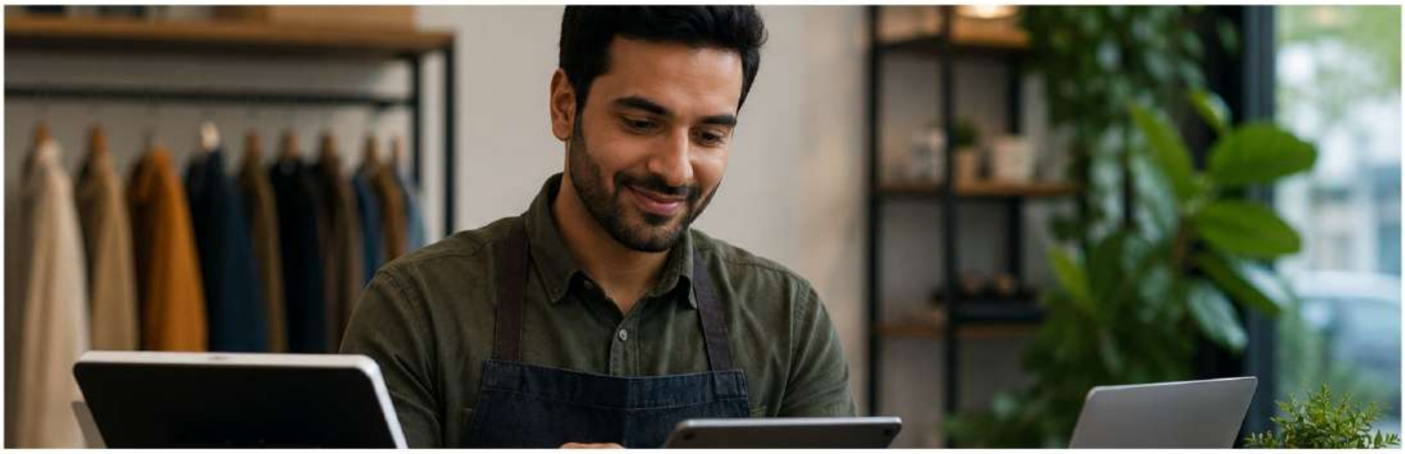
Meeting these expectations requires a fundamentally different banking model—one designed specifically around the realities of SME operations.

The Competitive Landscape Is Changing Rapidly

While many traditional institutions remain constrained by legacy systems and operating models, a new generation of competitors is aggressively pursuing the SME market.

Fintech companies, digital banks, and technology platforms are delivering frictionless and highly integrated experiences that seamlessly embed financial services into daily business operations. Platforms such as Shopify, Square, and Toast have evolved beyond software providers, becoming central components of how SMEs manage sales, payments, and business growth.

Simultaneously, fintech lenders are transforming business financing through real-time data analytics, artificial intelligence, automated underwriting, and rapid loan disbursement capabilities. These innovations allow them to assess risk and deliver funding with unprecedented speed and precision—often outperforming traditional banking institutions.



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Why Banks Still Hold a Competitive Advantage

Despite rising competition, banks remain exceptionally well-positioned to capture the SME opportunity.

Advancements in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, open banking, embedded finance, and digital onboarding have significantly reduced the operational costs associated with serving SMEs. These technologies enable banks to scale efficiently, personalize offerings, and generate profitable growth across previously underserved segments.
The challenge is no longer technological feasibility—it is strategic execution.

Six Models Demonstrating the Future of SME Banking

1. Digital-First SME Banking
Institutions such as **Zand** in the UAE have demonstrated that fully digital SME banking models can be launched rapidly while maintaining operational efficiency and profitability.

2. SME Ecosystem Marketplaces
Union Bank of the Philippines has created a comprehensive business marketplace that provides SMEs with access to financing, payment services, suppliers, and business management tools through a single integrated platform.

3. Embedded Finance
The success of **Amazon's sales-based lending model** illustrates how contextual financial services can leverage transactional data to provide highly relevant and timely funding solutions.

4. Artificial Intelligence and Predictive Analytics
AI-driven capabilities such as predictive cash-flow forecasting, alternative credit assessment models, intelligent recommendations, and automated risk management are redefining how banks engage with SMEs.

5. Collaborative and Co-Lending Models
Financial institutions such as **Karnataka Bank** are expanding access to credit by partnering with fintech providers and alternative lenders to serve underserved business segments more effectively.

6. Human-Centric Digital Experiences
RAKBANK has successfully combined advanced digital capabilities with personalized advisory support, creating a hybrid service model that balances efficiency with relationship-driven banking.

Pakistan's Digital Transformation: A Catalyst for SME Growth

The future outlook for Pakistan's SME sector is increasingly promising, driven by accelerating digital adoption and supportive government initiatives.

Expanding E-Commerce Opportunities
Pakistan's e-commerce market reached an estimated **USD 7.7 billion** in 2024 and continues to demonstrate strong growth potential. Increasing smartphone penetration, improved digital infrastructure, and rising consumer confidence in online transactions are creating unprecedented opportunities for SMEs to access broader domestic and international markets.

Mobile commerce has become particularly influential, accounting for approximately 80% of online purchases, enabling SMEs to leverage cost-effective digital marketing channels and scale more rapidly than ever before.

Accelerating Adoption of Digital Technologies

Research consistently demonstrates that SMEs embracing digital transformation achieve greater operational efficiency, business resilience, and competitiveness.

The adoption of technologies such as:

- Social media commerce
- Big data analytics
- Cloud-based business applications
- Internet of Things (IoT) solutions
- Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is enabling businesses to streamline operations, improve decision-making, and create sustainable long-term value.

Financial Inclusion Through Fintech Innovation

Digital lenders, fintech platforms, and microfinance institutions are expanding access to capital through alternative financing mechanisms, including digital lending, peer-to-peer financing, and data-driven credit assessment models. These innovations help overcome longstanding barriers associated with collateral requirements and conventional lending practices.

Government and Regulatory Support

Government agencies and SMEDA continue to champion SME modernization through initiatives focused on digital literacy, entrepreneurship development, legal and regulatory simplification, and technology adoption. Programs supporting women entrepreneurs and emerging industries such as electric mobility are further strengthening the ecosystem.

The Window of Opportunity Is Narrowing

As SMEs continue their digital evolution, their expectations of financial service providers are changing rapidly. Business owners increasingly seek banking experiences that are intelligent, integrated, intuitive, and available in real time.

Financial institutions that fail to adapt risk becoming increasingly disconnected from their customers' operational realities. Conversely, those that invest in digital capabilities, ecosystem partnerships, and data-driven engagement models will position themselves as indispensable growth partners for the SME sector.

Conclusion: SMEs Are Not a Segment—They Are a Strategic Growth Agenda

For banks seeking sustainable growth, few opportunities are as compelling as the SME sector. These businesses represent one of the largest and most dynamic engines of economic development, innovation, and job creation.

Capturing this opportunity, however, requires more than incremental improvements. It demands a fundamental shift in mindset, supported by modern technology, strategic partnerships, embedded financial services, and customer-centric innovation.

The institutions that embrace this transformation will become trusted partners in the growth journey of SMEs. Those that hesitate may find themselves watching from the sidelines as more agile competitors redefine the future of business banking.

The question is no longer whether banks should prioritize SMEs. The question is whether they can afford not to.

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Waqar Naqvi

Director, Information Technology
Habib University

AI

VOICES & VISION

"AI can bridge the gap between privilege and access, but only if we have the will to deploy it where it matters most."

Waqar Naqvi

Director, Information Technology
Habib University

How do you tackle the data quality challenge for AI in Pakistan?

Pakistan's AI problem isn't bad data — it's missing data. Every hospital visit, subsidy, and transaction must generate usable data by design. Satellite imagery and mobile patterns fill gaps today. But clean, structured data at scale requires one thing: political will.

How is AI helping solve real problems in agriculture, health, or education here?

AI closes the gap between privilege and access. It predicts crop failure, diagnoses disease on a $30 phone, and personalizes education for every child. The technology exists. The question is whether leaders have the will to aim it at those who need it most.

How can Pakistan nurture homegrown AI talent to compete globally?

Pakistan has 25,000 CS graduates and the world's youngest population. What's missing isn't talent — it's ecosystem. Fund AI labs, retain diaspora expertise, and build for emerging market problems the West ignores. That neglect is Pakistan's greatest opportunity.

Vahid Najafzadeh

Chief Executive Officer
Nova Finance

NOVA FINANCE

Digital Financial Services

"Financial inclusion begins when you focus on the needs of real people, not just products."

Vahid Najafzadeh

Chief Executive Officer
Nova Finance

What inspired you to launch NOVA Finance?

Big market opportunity. Big banks don't care much about small customers and just watching salaried people jump between loan sharks and borrowing from friends. So, we decided to build digital-first solution for salaried class, which is most underserved. Plus, we enjoy solving problems that banks find "too small to care about." So, we created something which is easy to use, fast and always ready for you.

How is NOVA Finance helping improve digital financial services?

Our aim is not to improve digital financial services, our aim is to make our customers happy and the best way to do it, is to do it through their smart phones. Each smartphone is equal to bank branch, but easier to reach, easier to communicate.
We're making finance less scary and more instant. Instead of paperwork and waiting, our app gives people access to salary advances and short-term loans in under 60 seconds. This time is not enough even to enter the bank branch not to mention taking anything form there. Think of us as the fintech for salaried class.

What are the biggest challenges in the fintech industry today?

Trust of the companies in their employees and resistance for innovation of decision makers.

How can fintech improve financial inclusion in the region?

By focusing on the needs of real people

What is your vision for the future of NOVA Finance?

WE want to meet all financial needs of salaried class in one app, to become the go-to platform for everyday financial needs in Pakistan and beyond. Salary advances are just the start; we want to build a full ecosystem of smart, Shariah-compliant, digital-first financial products.

Akbar Shah Khan

Regional Manager Sales
Cinergie Digital

CINERGIE DIGITAL

Transformation

"The biggest risk today is not adopting AI incorrectly—the biggest risk is waiting too long while the world moves forward without you."

Akbar Shah Khan

Regional Manager Sales
Cinergie Digital

What role is Cinergie Digital playing in driving digital transformation across Pakistan and the Middle East?

Cinergie Digital is helping organizations bridge the gap between traditional operations and modern digital ecosystems. Across Pakistan and the Middle East, we are working closely with enterprises in sectors like banking, oil & gas, manufacturing, and public services to modernize legacy systems, improve operational efficiency, and accelerate data-driven decision-making.

Our focus is not just technology implementation, it is about enabling long-term business transformation through AI, data analytics, intelligent automation, integration platforms, and scalable enterprise solutions. We aim to become a trusted transformation partner that helps organizations move toward agility, innovation, and sustainable digital growth.

How are data analytics and Ai helping businesses make better strategic decisions today?

Data analytics and Ai are fundamentally changing how businesses operate and make decisions. Organizations today are no longer relying only on historical reports or intuition, they are using real time analytics/insights, predictive analytics, and intelligent automation to make faster and more accurate decisions.

Ai helps businesses identify patterns, customer behaviour, operational risks, and future trends that were previously difficult to detect. At the same time, data analytics enables leadership teams to measure performance, optimize resources, and respond proactively to market changes.

The companies that are winning today are not necessarily the biggest companies, they are the companies that can understand and use their data intelligently.

"AI is not here to replace human intelligence—it is here to enhance human capability."

What are the key challenges organizations face during digital transformation journeys?

One of the biggest challenges is not technology, it is change management. Many organizations still struggle with legacy systems, they do not understand and no willing to change as they have siloed data, resistance to change, and the lack of a clear digital strategy.

Another major challenge is adopting technology without aligning it with business objectives. Digital transformation cannot succeed if it is treated only as an IT initiative. It requires leadership commitment, process re-engineering, data governance, cybersecurity readiness, and continuous workforce adaptation.

Organizations that approach transformation with a long term vision and phased execution strategy are usually the ones that achieve measurable success.

How important are data strategy and governance for business growth and innovation?

Data strategy and governance are now business critical, not optional. Without proper governance, even the most advanced Ai or analytics platforms can produce unreliable outcomes.

A strong data strategy ensures that organizations have accurate, secure, consistent, and accessible data for decision making. Governance creates accountability, compliance, trust, and transparency across the organization.

In today's digital economy, data is becoming one of the most valuable business assets. Organizations that manage their data effectively are in a much stronger position to innovate, scale operations, improve customer experiences, and remain competitive.

What advice would you give to companies looking to adopt AI and digital solutions successfully?

My advice would be simple: do not adopt AI because it is trending, adopt it because it solves a real business problem. One should organize and start strategies Ai Architecture understand what would be the right path/flow which lead the right direction for the future.

Many organizations fail because they start with tools instead of strategy. Start by understanding your operational pain points, customer challenges, and business goals. Then identify where Ai, automation, or digital platforms can create measurable impact.

Also, companies must understand that Ai is not here to replace human intelligence, it is here to enhance human capability. The future belongs to organizations that combine technology with human expertise, adaptability, and vision.

The biggest risk today is not adopting AI incorrectly. The biggest risk is waiting too long while the world moves forward without you.

Abdul Rafey

Executive Director
Muhammad Abbas & Co.
(Chartered Accountants)

Leadership

"Many businesses fail not because of a lack of ideas, but because of weak planning and execution."

What inspired you to transition from telecom into entrepreneurship and education?

My experience in telecom taught me how technology, customer experience, and innovation drive business growth. As I engaged with entrepreneurs and businesses through Muhammad Abbas & Co. (Chartered Accountants), I realized that many talented individuals lacked access to practical business and financial knowledge. That inspired me to focus on entrepreneurship and education, helping people build skills that support sustainable careers and successful businesses.

What challenges do startups and growing businesses face today?

Many startups struggle with access to funding, regulatory compliance, financial management, and scaling operations effectively. One common challenge we encounter while advising businesses is that founders often focus heavily on sales and product development but underestimate the importance of proper financial planning and governance. Sustainable growth requires balancing innovation with strong business fundamentals.

How can professional education help shape future business leaders?

Professional education develops more than technical knowledge—it builds analytical thinking, ethical decision-making, and leadership capabilities. In today's environment, future leaders need to understand finance, compliance, technology, and strategy simultaneously. Continuous learning enables professionals to make informed decisions and adapt confidently to changing business landscapes.

How important is customer success in building sustainable businesses?

Customer success is one of the strongest indicators of long-term business sustainability. In our work with clients across various industries, we have observed that businesses that focus on understanding customer needs and delivering consistent value are the ones that achieve sustainable growth. Strong customer relationships create trust, retention, referrals, and ultimately a stronger business foundation.

What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs and professionals?

Invest in learning, build strong professional relationships, and understand your numbers from day one. Many businesses fail not because of a lack of ideas, but because of weak planning and execution. Seek guidance from experienced mentors and advisors, remain adaptable, and focus on creating long-term value rather than short-term gains.

ecomback™

Rana Muhammad Ahson Javid

COO/Partner
EcomBack

Web Accessibility

"Accessibility is not just about compliance—it's about ensuring equal access to the digital world for everyone."

COO/Partner
EcomBack

Rana Muhammad Ahson Javid

Please introduce yourself and share your professional journey?

I'm Ahson Rana, COO/Partner of EcomBack. My journey started in technology and digital operations, but over time I became passionate about accessibility after seeing how many users still face barriers online. Today, I work closely with businesses to help them build more inclusive and ADA-compliant digital experiences.

How is EcomBack helping businesses meet accessibility standards like ADA and EAA?

At EcomBack, we help businesses through accessibility audits, code-level remediation, user testing, and ongoing monitoring. Our focus is not just compliance on paper, but creating websites that are genuinely usable for people with disabilities while helping companies reduce legal risks.

What message would you like to share with companies about building a more inclusive digital future?

Accessibility should not be treated as just a legal requirement — it's about creating equal access for everyone online. Companies that invest in accessibility today are building stronger brands, better user experiences, and a more inclusive digital future for all users.

Naureen Ansari

Master Trainer & CEO
Towards Brilliance

Growth and Transformation

"Different people need different approaches. Understanding human psychology is the key to effective leadership."

What inspired you to start Towards Brilliance, and what is its core mission?

Like everything in the world, Towards Brilliance happened because a need had to be fulfilled. The need to stay afloat in uncertain times during year 2020.
What started as a means to make ends meet using my skills as a soft skills trainer and consultant is now a global mission to provide individuals a path to truly master their mind and life.
In addition to performance improvement trainings for corporate teams we also offer international certifications for individuals who want to work on their personal development and growth.

How do soft skills and mind management contribute to professional and personal success?

Mind Management and Soft Skills Development improves a person's cognitive capability. To learn, to problem solve, to engage with others. Simply put, to co-exist.
They help in keeping the noise away and work with clear signals to move towards a desired outcome with yourself or with others as a team.

How can organizations create a culture of continuous learning and personal growth?

Creating a culture of Continuous Learning and Personal Growth requires structural re-alignment and not just training budgets. It essentially requires leaders that are emotionally intelligent at "exchanging" feedback, fiercely courageous at taking responsibility and absolutely meticulous when it comes to developing others.Once we have more people taking responsibility for change compared to the number of people who identify problems transformation will be automatic.

In your experience, what are the most common challenges professionals face in communication and leadership today?

Two major common challenges;
One is Lack of quality communication. There is much communication yet we need to ask "is it delivering results and how quickly?" E.g. Feedback is not exchanged in fear of upsetting the other person.

Second is that we assume "what worked for one will work for all." Different times require different approaches. Same works for different people. One employee performs best when given authority another might need extra pressure and micromanagement to get things done. But we don't voice it as it gets controversial. Yet this is simple Human Psychology. This is also why we are majorly struggling at engaging with GenZ.

What advice would you give to young professionals who want to improve their confidence, mindset, and career growth?

Mind Management and Soft Skills Development improves a person's cognitive capability. To learn, to problem solve, to engage with others. Simply put, to co-exist.

They help in keeping the noise away and work with clear signals to move towards a desired outcome with yourself or with others as a team.

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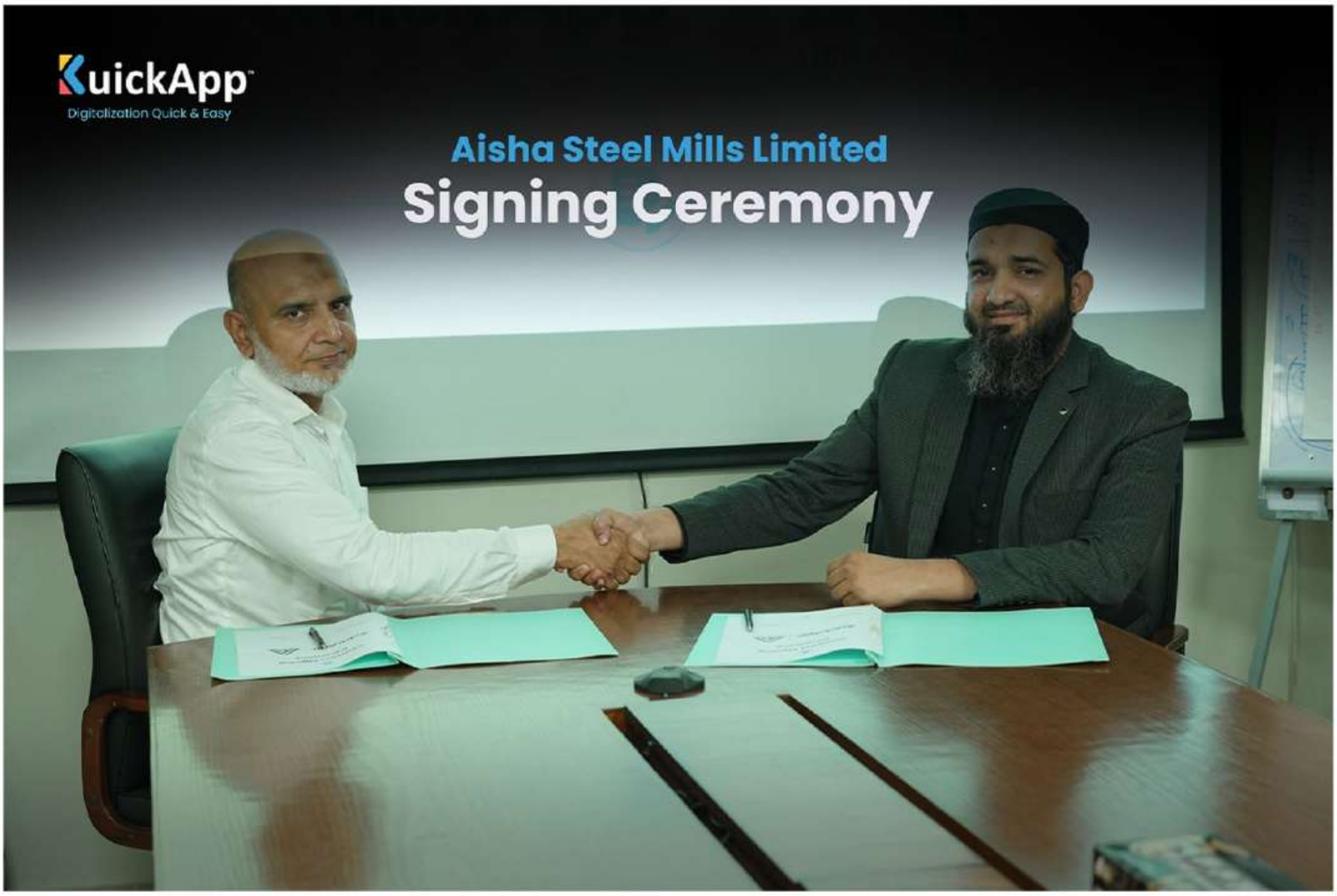
KuickApp and Aisha Steel Mills Limited Sign Partnership Agreement for Digital Transformation.



Aisha Steel Mills Limited (ASML) has officially partnered with KuickApp, marking a significant step towards strengthening enterprise-wide digital transformation and process automation capabilities.

As part of this initiative, KuickApp will implement centralized digital solutions for Gate Pass Management and Change Request Form (CRF) processes aimed at improving operational visibility, process standardization, and workflow efficiency across the organization. The solutions will help streamline approvals, reduce manual dependencies, improve tracking and transparency, and enable more structured and efficient process management.

Through this collaboration, ASML aims to strengthen cross-functional collaboration, enhance operational control, and establish greater efficiency in managing critical workflows while aligning seamlessly with existing enterprise systems.

Source;https://kuickapp.com//

About Aisha Steel Mills Limited

Aisha Steel Mills Limited (ASML), a flagship company of the Arif Habib Group, is one of Pakistan's leading manufacturers in the flat-rolled steel industry. Operating a state-of-the-art cold rolling and hot-dipped galvanized steel complex with an annual production capacity of 700,000 metric tons, ASML serves key sectors including automotive, engineering, and home appliances. The company remains committed to innovation, operational excellence, and international quality standards through advanced manufacturing and customer-focused solutions.

About KuickApp

KuickApp is a low-code and no-code application development platform designed to simplify and digitize business processes, providing customized solutions for every industry. With its user-friendly interface, drag and drop tools, and configurable modules, KuickApp empowers business users to build their own applications without coding, eliminate manual tasks, and accelerate digital transformation.

AISHA STEEL MILLS LIMITED

KuickApp™
Digitalization Quick & Easy

Source;https://kuickapp.com//

Arcana Info Expands into AI with ABL Engagement

Arcana Info has announced its expansion into enterprise AI with the launch of a new project focused on audit automation in collaboration with Allied Bank Limited (ABL). The initiative marks a significant step in the company's growth, applying AI to enhance SOC verification and audit processes. As part of this engagement, Arcana Info will design and implement an AI-driven solution to streamline SOC verification workflows. The project focuses on automating document comparison, validating system configurations, and identifying discrepancies across audit cycles.

By introducing intelligent workflows and data-driven validation, the solution aims to reduce manual effort, improve accuracy and enable faster audit turnaround. This initiative reflects Arcana Info's commitment to delivering practical AI applications that address real business challenges within the financial sector.

Uzma Shahzad, AVP Business Growth & Regional Operations, shared her insights on the project: *"This initiative marks an important milestone in our journey into AI-led consulting. We are focused on building solutions that are not only technically robust but also deliver clear operational value. Projects of this scale allow us to demonstrate how AI can meaningfully transform critical business functions."*

Arcana Info is a technology consulting firm focused on delivering innovative, data-driven solutions for enterprise clients. With a growing emphasis on artificial intelligence, the company is expanding its capabilities to help organisations adopt and scale AI across key business processes.

AlliedBank arcana DIGITAL NEXT

Source: www.arcanainfo.com/

TechMatter Launches Cure AR, a Next-Gen AI-Enabled Medical Billing Software to Simplify Healthcare Revenue Management

GLENDALE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ – TechMatter proudly announces its medical billing software, Cure AR.
Healthcare practices across the country continue to face challenges with growing administrative burdens, claim denials, and delayed reimbursements. Cure AR was developed to directly address these issues by combining artificial intelligence, automation, and advanced analytics into one intelligent platform.

The result: fewer denials, faster payments, and greater financial visibility. With Cure AR, healthcare providers are already seeing a reduction of 33% in accounts receivable days, enabling faster reimbursements, reduced overhead costs, and less time spent on paperwork, so providers can focus more on patient care.

"Cure AR was developed to eliminate the complexity and frustration healthcare providers face in billing and collections," said Mubashir Hanif, CEO of TechMatter.

"Healthcare is about people, not about administrative tasks and piling paperwork. Our goal was to create a solution that allows providers to reduce their burden and improve their financial operations while staying focused on patient well-being."

Source: www.techmatter.co//

Adding to this, the Director of Product Innovation at TechMatter shared, *"Cure AR isn't just software. It's a smarter way of managing revenue. Through its AI capabilities, our medical billing software will be able to help practices of all sizes predict, prevent, and resolve claim issues before they become bottlenecks. This level of proactive automation is what sets Cure AR apart."*

Cure AR offers comprehensive end-to-end capabilities, including:

- Automated Claim Scrubbing & Submission: AI validation identifies and corrects coding or data errors before submission.
- Intelligent Denial Management: Detects root causes of denials and prioritizes resubmissions for faster recovery.
- Seamless Integration: Works effortlessly with leading EHR and practice management systems.
- Real-Time Analytics Dashboard: Customizable financial insights into claims, collections, and payer performance.
- Secure Cloud-Based Infrastructure: Fully HIPAA-compliant, ensuring patient and financial data are always protected.
- Fully Customizable & Scalable: Designed to meet the needs of solo practitioners, clinics, and large hospital networks.

What makes Cure AR truly unique is its ability to adapt to each organization's workflow. Users can customize dashboards, automate repetitive billing tasks, and tailor reporting metrics to meet compliance standards and business goals. Its intelligent automation reduces redundancy, improves accuracy, and provides healthcare leaders with the visibility they need to make confident financial decisions.

Availability

Cure AR is now available nationwide to healthcare providers and billing companies. Interested organizations can request a free demo to see how Cure AR can optimize their revenue cycle management.

About TechMatter

Founded in 2017 and headquartered in Glendale, California, TechMatter is a technology solutions provider specializing in healthcare innovation, managed IT services, and enterprise software development. The company delivers end-to-end solutions that include electronic health record systems, practice management platforms, revenue cycle management, and cloud-based infrastructure.

techmatter

QBS Co Enables United Energy Pakistan to Modernize Field Operations with PRIDE Mobile Solution

QBS Co has successfully deployed PRIDE, its intelligent mobile field operations solution, for United Energy Pakistan (UEP), marking a significant step toward digitized, resilient, and field ready operations. This milestone enables UEP to overcome connectivity limitations in remote environments while strengthening operational efficiency, accuracy, and business continuity across field activities.

Built to integrate seamlessly with UEP's SAP S 4HANA landscape, PRIDE transforms how field teams capture, validate, and manage operational data. The solution enables offline execution with automated synchronization, reducing dependency on network availability while improving reliability and responsiveness in the field. By replacing manual processes with a scalable digital platform, UEP gains greater visibility, consistency, and control across critical operational workflows. This reflects QBS Co's business-led approach to transformation, where technology is deployed to solve real operational challenges and deliver measurable enterprise value.

"Digital transformation creates value when technology empowers people to make better decisions. Organizations that combine operational excellence with intelligent systems will be best positioned for sustainable growth," said Dr Muhammad Ismail, Head of AI & Emerging Technologies.

About QBS

QBS is a global digital transformation and technology consulting firm specializing in SAP implementations, enterprise automation, and AI driven solutions. With a strong presence across KSA, UAE, Pakistan, and beyond, QBS enables organizations to operate as intelligent and data driven enterprises through a process first approach to transformation.

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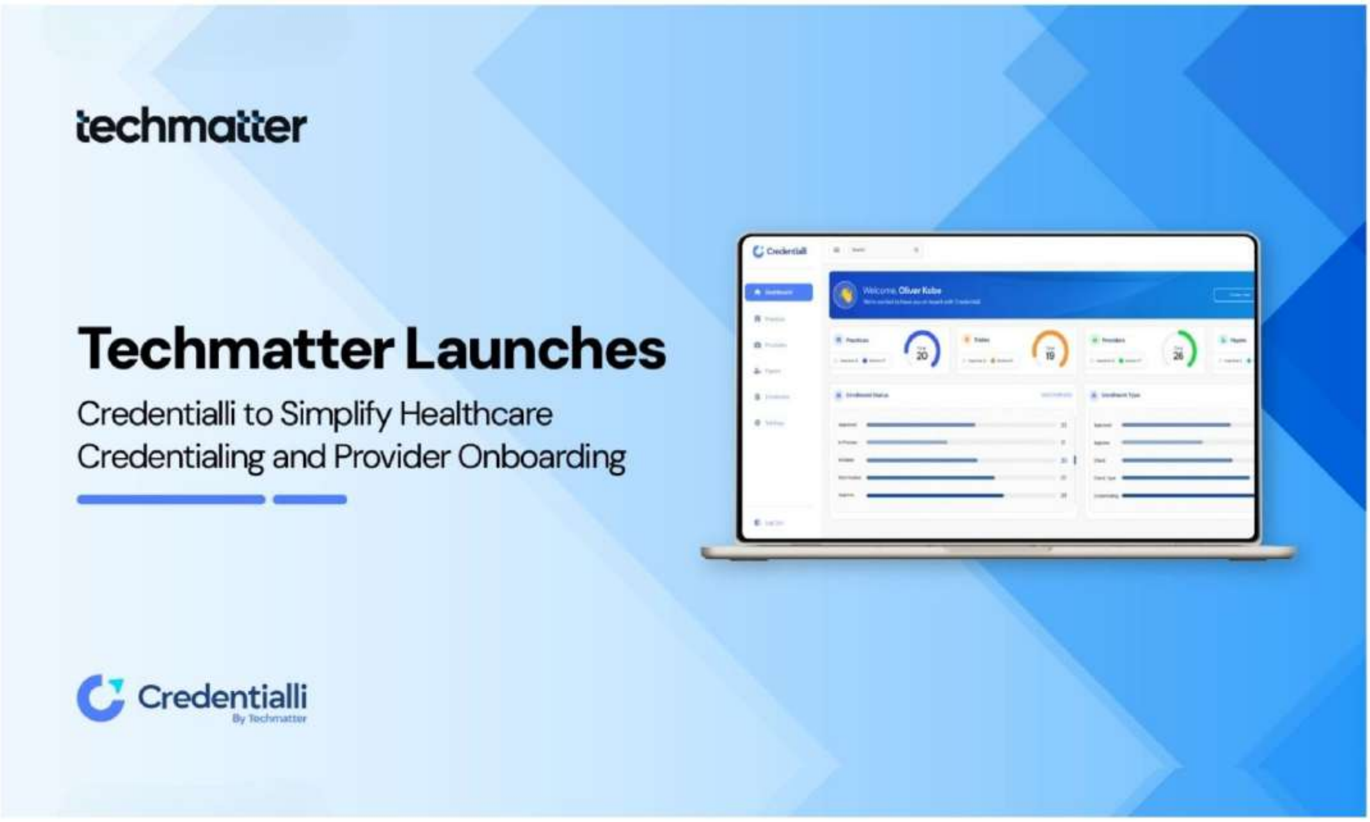
Credentialli Powered by Techmatter: Simplifying Healthcare Credentialing and Provider Onboarding



Resolving credential bottlenecks for organizations and helping providers start practice faster

GLENDALE, CA, UNITED STATES, April 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ — Techmatter today announced the launch of Credentialli, a modern platform built to streamline one of healthcare's most complex and overlooked operational challenges: provider credentialing.

As healthcare organizations grow, so does the administrative burden of onboarding providers, managing credentials, and ensuring compliance. Many teams still rely on fragmented systems, manual processes, and spreadsheets, leading to delays, errors, and limited visibility.

Credentialli Changes That.

Healthcare teams shouldn't have to chase paperwork to deliver care"— Mubashir Hanif

Built as a centralized, intelligent workflow platform, Credentialli brings structure, automation, and real-time visibility to the entire credentialing lifecycle, helping organizations move faster while staying compliant.

"Credentialli brings clarity and control to credentialing by replacing manual processes with a system that is automated, transparent, and built for scale." said Mubashir Hanif, CEO of Techmatter.

From Bottlenecks to Clarity

Credentialli unifies credentialing and onboarding into a single, seamless experience. Instead of navigating scattered tools and manual follow-ups, teams can track progress, manage documentation, and ensure compliance all in one place.

With Credentialli, organizations can:

– Track provider onboarding in real time through centralized dashboards
– Automate workflows and task management, reducing delays and manual effort
– Maintain audit-ready compliance with secure, traceable documentation
– Integrate seamlessly with existing EHR, HR, and operational systems
– Improve data accuracy and security with built-in validation and safeguards
– The result is faster onboarding, fewer errors, and greater operational visibility across teams.

Delivering Measurable Impact

Early adopters are already seeing results, including significantly faster provider onboarding and improved cross-team coordination. By eliminating administrative friction, Credentialli allows healthcare staff to focus on what matters most: patient care.

"Credentialli isn't just a tool, it's a system that brings accountability and alignment to our workflows," said an early user. "We now have full visibility into our credentialing process, without the constant back-and-forth."

A Platform Built for What's Next

Credentialli marks Techmatter's continued investment in solving critical operational challenges in healthcare. Future updates will introduce AI-assisted verification, predictive insights, and deeper integrations, further accelerating credentialing workflows.

"Credentialing is foundational to healthcare operations, yet it has remained largely unchanged," Hanif added. *"With Credentialli, we are setting a new standard, one that evolves with the needs of modern healthcare organizations."*

techmatter

Source: www.techmatter.co//

About Techmatter:

Techmatter is a healthtech company specializing in digital product development, managed IT services, and revenue cycle solutions. Since 2016, the company has helped healthcare organizations scale operations, improve efficiency, and adopt modern technology solutions.

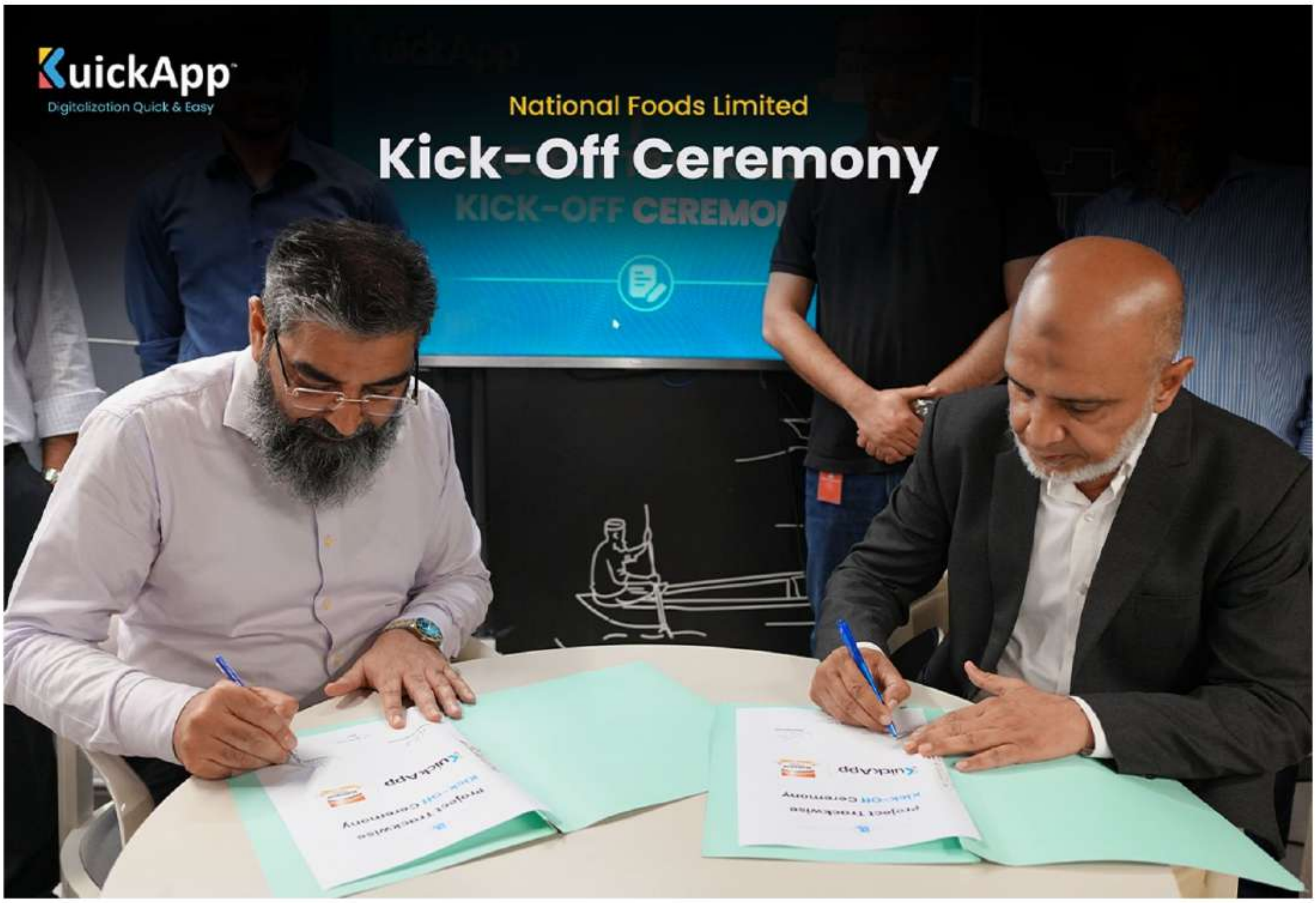
About Credentialli:

Credentialli is a healthcare credentialing platform that streamlines provider onboarding, automates documentation workflows, and provides real-time visibility into credentialing status. Developed by Techmatter, it enables healthcare organizations to reduce administrative burden while ensuring accuracy and compliance.

Media Contact:
Nasir Nazir
TechMatter
email us here
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn
Instagram
Facebook

Source: www.techmatter.co//

KuickApp Partners with National Foods for Master Data Governance Transformation



KuickApp is proud to announce the kickoff of its Master Governance initiative with National Foods Limited (NFL) through Project TrackWise.

As part of this engagement, National Foods is working with us to implement a Master Data Governance (MDG) solution. This will help improve data consistency and strengthen control across the organization. The solution will be fully integrated with their ERP system, ensuring smooth data flow and better alignment across system.

Through Project TrackWise, National Foods aims to strengthen collaboration across departments, improve process efficiency, and establish greater control and transparency over critical business data while aligning with its existing enterprise systems.

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KuickApp
Digitalization Quick & Easy

Source;https://kuickapp.com//

The kickoff ceremony marks the beginning of a strategic collaboration focused on driving digital transformation and operational excellence through scalable and intelligent business solutions.

About National Foods Limited

Founded in 1970, National Foods Limited (NFL) is one of Pakistan's leading multi-category food companies, offering a wide range of high-quality food products trusted locally and globally. With operations across multiple international markets, NFL continues to blend tradition with innovation while enriching lives through authentic food experiences.

About KuickApp

KuickApp is a low-code and no-code application development platform designed to simplify and digitize business processes, providing customized solutions for every industry. With its user-friendly interface, drag and drop tools, and configurable modules, KuickApp empowers business users to build their own applications without coding, eliminate manual tasks, and accelerate digital transformation.

National FOODS SINCE 1970

KuickApp™ Digitalization Quick & Easy

Source;https://kuickapp.com//

PRESS RELEASE

DigiTrends Takes the Lead: Launching AI CoE to Redefine Enterprise Transformation

Recognized as a leading innovator of transformative digital solutions for clients around the world, DigiTrends is further solidifying its commitment to forward-thinking digital transformation with the launch of its AI Center of Excellence (AI CoE). This strategic initiative is intended to help organizations navigate the complexities of AI adoption with a clear structure and measurable impact.

Positioned as a long-term solution rather than a one-time service, the AI Center of Excellence reflects DigiTrends' focus on ensuring a strategic fit with business requirements and presenting a clear return on investment for stakeholders for a strategic implementation of AI across business functions.

About the AI Center of Excellence

The AI conversation in most boardrooms is no longer about why, but how. Many organizations are under pressure to act on AI but lack a coherent plan or the internal capability to do so. DigiTrends' AI Center of Excellence aims to address this gap by giving leadership a structured plan on AI integration with visibility on the apparent return on investment so they can commit to this transformation with confidence.

Source:/digitrends.co/

Designed for organizations seeking clarity on AI's practical use, it offers structured engagement with leadership, cross-functional collaboration, and solution development tailored to the organization's priorities.

What It Means for Organizations

The AI CoE intends to give enterprises a structured approach to AI implementation that results in defined strategic output with lower risk. It is a practical solution to allow businesses to analyze AI's function in specific operations and investigate its worth using controlled pilots.

Benefits to Business Performance

DigiTrends' AI Center of Excellence is set to present a clear advantage to organizations and their executives facing increasing pressure to adopt AI, such as:

- AI initiatives aligned with executive priorities
- Faster decision-making through validated use cases
- Reduced risk due to testing solutions in a controlled environment
- Builds internal capability for long-term AI adoption
- Increased stakeholder confidence through phased execution

For organizations actively exploring AI adoption and looking to operationalize it with clarity, governance, and measurable outcomes, schedule a conversation with the DigiTrends AI CoE team here: https://share-na2.hsforms.com/264y4_8t3T8GuYvgxgjC20wcd7zq

About DigiTrends

Founded in 2015, DigiTrends is a global digital transformation company helping businesses design, build, and scale intelligent technology solutions. With growing operations across KSA, USA, UAE, Pakistan, and Norway, the company serves clients in highly regulated sectors across healthcare, finance, pharmaceuticals, retail, and more.

A Long-Term Partner in AI Enablement

With the formalization of its AI Center of Excellence (AI CoE), DigiTrends has reaffirmed its commitment to scalable and practical digital transformation, offering its clients the competitive advantage they need to align AI initiatives with their business goals

DigiTrends

Source:/digitrends.co/

Risk Associates Earns CREST Accreditation for Penetration Testing, Signalling Global Cybersecurity Excellence

Bella Vista, NSW, Australia – 6 May 2026 – Risk Associates, an established risk and cybersecurity compliance and assessment firm with over 25 years of experience, today announced it has achieved CREST (International) accreditation for Penetration Testing, a globally recognised benchmark for cybersecurity service providers.

This accreditation marks a significant milestone for Risk Associates, formally recognising the organisation's capability to deliver high-quality, independent penetration testing services in line with the internationally accepted standards. This achievement reinforces Risk Associates' commitment to technical excellence, rigorous quality assurance and trusted cybersecurity practices, further strengthening its position as a global provider of security and compliance services.

With more than two decades of experience in risk and cybersecurity advisory and assessments, Risk Associates has established a consistent approach to delivering structured, high-assurance security testing and vulnerability assessment services across a range of industries. The CREST (International) accreditation provides formal validation of this approach and aligns the firm with an international network of trusted providers.

Source://riskassociates.com/

Nick Benson, CEO of CREST (International), said: *"As demand for trusted cyber security services and professional standards is on the rise, we are thrilled to welcome Risk Associates to our community and congratulate them for achieving accreditation for its Penetration Testing services".*

Dr Aftab Rizvi, Chief Executive Officer of Risk Associates, stated: *"With over 25 years of experience in this industry, our commitment has consistently been to deliver work with precision, enhancing capability, upholding high standards, and establishing client trust. The CREST (International) accreditation serves as formal acknowledgment of these efforts, providing independent verification of our operational approach and the thoroughness applied to security testing, particularly within critical assurance environments."*

Hussain Zaidi, Senior Manager of Risk Associates, further remarked: *"From a service delivery standpoint, this accreditation holds considerable significance for our clients. It serves as clear validation of our methodology for conducting penetration testing, not only from a technical perspective but also with respect to consistency and quality. As organizations encounter increasingly complex risks and heightened expectations, the presence of an independent industry benchmark provides substantial assurance and added value."*

This sentiment was echoed by Kashif Hassan, Managing Director of Risk Associates, who stated, *"We are delighted to add CREST (International) accreditation to our portfolio, further enhancing our reputation and capabilities. We are confident that this recognition will reassure our clients that our services are delivered by a highly competent team, adhering to industry-accepted standards."*

About Risk Associates

With over 25 years in cybersecurity testing and compliance, Risk Associates is a global cybersecurity compliance, testing and assessment service provider, Risk Associates is PCI SSC Qualified Security Assessor Company (QSAC), PCI Approved Scanning Vendor (ASV), PCI Secure Software Framework (SSF), PCI PIN, and PCI 3DS Assessor. The firm also employs Australian Signals Directorate approved IRAP assessor, reflecting its expertise in specialized security assessments across various regulatory environments. These credentials establish Risk Associates as a reliable partner for industry-validated security and compliance solutions.

About CREST (International)

CREST (International) is a global not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising standards and building trust in the cybersecurity profession.

Established in the UK in 2006, CREST (International) works with its international community of Member companies and practitioners to promote excellence, integrity and professional development across the cyber ecosystem. Through robust standards, accreditation frameworks and skills pathways, CREST (International) helps organisations buy cybersecurity services with confidence and supports practitioners in developing trusted, globally recognised careers.

Working closely with governments, regulators and industry stakeholders, CREST (International) plays an active role in shaping policy, strengthening market confidence, and supporting the growth of a resilient, professional cybersecurity sector worldwide.

CREST RISK ASSOCIATES

Source://riskassociates.com/

Mobilink Bank Partners with Legal Aid Society to Advance Women's Inheritance Rights and Climate Resilience in Pakistan

Mobilink Bank has partnered with Legal Aid Society (LAS) to help women in Pakistan secure their inheritance rights through legal support, awareness campaigns, and community outreach. As part of its CSR initiatives, the bank will fund legal cases involving inheritance disputes, including those affecting climate-displaced women.

The collaboration will provide legal consultations, documentation assistance, court representation, and follow-up support until cases are resolved. It also includes awareness sessions to educate communities about women's inheritance rights and access to justice.

Through its flagship campaign, The Invisible Heirs, Mobilink Bank continues to promote women's financial empowerment. The bank has also introduced Pakistan's first in-app inheritance calculator on the Dost App, enabling users to estimate their rightful inheritance shares through a simple, transparent, and Shariah-compliant process.

The initiative reinforces Mobilink Bank's commitment to building a more inclusive and financially empowered society where women have equitable access to rights, resources, and opportunities.

LAS LEGAL AID SOCIETY

MobilinkBank

Source://mobilinkbank.com/

Best Payment Gateway in Pakistan 2026: Complete Comparison Guide

Pakistan's digital payments market crossed Rs. 9.5 trillion in quarterly transaction volume in 2024, yet most businesses still lose customers at checkout. The payment gateway you choose determines your success rate, your margins, and how fast you can go live. This guide covers everything you need to make the right call.

TL;DR What You'll Learn

- Pakistan's digital payment transaction volumes grew over 40% year-on-year in 2024, making gateway selection a critical growth decision, not just an IT procurement task
- Not all gateways support JazzCash and Easypaisa, the two wallets covering 60M+ users in Pakistan. Missing either is missing your market
- Hidden fees, redirect-based checkout flows, and slow onboarding are the three biggest pain points Pakistani merchants report during gateway evaluation
- Simpaisa is the only platform offering acquiring + disbursements + remittance through a single API, across Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Iraq
- Go-live timelines vary wildly: some providers take 4–6 weeks; others get you live in days
- For marketplaces, ride-hailing platforms, and multi-sided businesses, payout rails
- matter as much as card acceptance, and most local gateways don't have them

Introduction: Why Choosing the Right Gateway Matters in 2026

Pakistan's e-commerce market is projected to reach $6–7 billion by 2026, but only if merchants can actually convert. Right now, cash-on-delivery (COD) still accounts for 60–70% of all e-commerce orders in Pakistan. The return rate on COD orders sits between 30–40%. On prepaid orders, that number collapses to 5–8%. That gap is not a consumer behavior problem. It is a payment infrastructure problem.

Businesses that accept cards and wallets seamlessly see dramatically lower return rates and higher customer lifetime value. But picking the wrong payment gateway, one with redirect flows, limited wallet support, or poor API documentation, recreates the very friction you were trying to eliminate.

In 2026, the stakes are higher. SBP's push for digital financial inclusion, Raast's rapid expansion (crossing 100 million transactions in 2024), and JazzCash's 40M+ registered user base mean the infrastructure exists. The question is which gateway connects you to it most efficiently and at what cost to your margins and your customer experience.

What Is a Payment Gateway? How It Works in Pakistan

A payment gateway is the technology layer that authorises and processes digital payments between a buyer, a merchant, and their respective banks or wallets.

In Pakistan, the transaction flow works like this:

1. A customer selects a payment method: card, JazzCash, Easypaisa, or bank transfer (IBFT/Raast)
2. The gateway encrypts and transmits the transaction data to the acquiring bank or wallet operator
3. The acquiring bank requests authorisation from the card network (Visa, Mastercard) or wallet provider
4. An approval or decline is returned in real time
5. The gateway notifies both merchant and customer, and settlement begins

The Pakistan-specific complexity: Unlike mature markets, where card rails dominate, Pakistan runs on a dual infrastructure, with card networks and a mobile wallet ecosystem. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, over 100 million adults in Pakistan remain underbanked or unbanked, and for much of this population, JazzCash and Easypaisa are their primary financial instruments. A gateway that only processes Visa and Mastercard misses the majority of Pakistan's active digital payment users.

Additionally, SBP's Raast Instant Payment System, a direct bank-to-bank transfer rail introduced and rapidly scaled since 2022, has now crossed 100 million transactions, adding a third payment channel that progressive gateways are actively integrating. The right payment gateway in Pakistan in 2026 is not just a card processor. It is a unified access point to every major payment rail in the market: cards, wallets, and instant bank transfers.

Top 8 Payment Gateways in Pakistan: Features Comparison Table

Here is a structured comparison of the principal payment gateway options available to Pakistani businesses in 2026:

Source://www.simpaisa.com/

Gateway	Cards	JazzCash	Easypaisa	Payouts API	Cross-Border	Go-Live Time
Simpaisa	Visa, MC, UnionPay	Native	Native	Full	Yes 5+ markets	**Days**
PayFast	Visa, MC	Yes	Yes	Limited	No	2–3 weeks
Swich	Visa, MC	Partial	Partial	Yes	Yes	2–4 weeks
PayPro	Visa, MC	Yes	Yes	No	No	2–3 weeks
Checkout .com	Yes	No	No	Limited	Yes	4–6 weeks
Stripe	Yes	No	No	Limited	Yes	Not locally licensed
Nium	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	4–8 weeks
AbhiPay	No	Yes	Yes	Wage only	No	Variable

Key observation: Global platforms like Checkout.com and Stripe offer world-class card infrastructure but have zero integration with Pakistan's dominant mobile wallets. This is not a minor gap; it means your checkout excludes the majority of Pakistan's digital payment users. For any business primarily targeting Pakistani consumers, this is a disqualifying limitation regardless of how strong the brand name is.

Payment Gateway Fees Comparison Transaction %, Setup, Monthly

Fees in Pakistan's payment gateway market are rarely published openly. Most providers quote rates based on business volume, vertical, and risk profile. That said, the typical market structure looks like this:

Fee Type	Typical Market Range (Pakistan)	What to Watch For
MDR (Merchant Discount Rate)	1.5% – 3.5%	Varies by card type and wallet; wallet MDR is usually lower
Setup Fee	PKR 0 – 50,000	Some providers charge for integration support or enterprise onboarding
Monthly Platform Fee	PKR 0 – 15,000	Often bundled with dashboard and reporting access
Settlement FX Markup	0.5% – 2.5%	Critical for businesses receiving USD or cross-border settlements
Chargeback Fee	PKR 2,000 – 5,000 per case	Rarely disclosed upfront, always ask explicitly

The MDR trap most merchants fall into: Many businesses focus on headline MDR and miss the FX markup on international settlements. A gateway charging 1.8% MDR with a 2.0% FX markup on USD settlements is materially more expensive than one charging 2.2% MDR with a 0.8% FX markup, particularly for businesses with international revenue.

Source://www.simpaisa.com/

A practical rule: always ask providers for your effective rate across your expected transaction mix, cards, wallets, and bank transfers, weighted by your actual volume split. If a provider cannot give you that number, it is a meaningful red flag about their operational transparency.

Pro Tip: Negotiate settlement timelines alongside rates. A gateway offering T+1 settlement at slightly higher MDR may be worth more to your cash flow than T+3 settlement at a lower rate, especially for high-volume e-commerce businesses managing inventory cycles.

Which Gateway Supports JazzCash & Easypaisa?

This is the single most important capability question for any Pakistani merchant evaluating a payment gateway in 2026.

JazzCash has over 40 million registered users. Easypaisa serves over 20 million. Together, these two wallets cover the large majority of Pakistan's active digital payment users, millions of whom do not use credit or debit cards as their primary payment method. According to SBP data, Pakistan has 195 million+ mobile subscribers, and wallet adoption is deepening faster in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities than card penetration.

A payment gateway that does not natively support both wallets is not a full-coverage solution for Pakistan.

Here is how the current market breaks down:

- Full native support (both wallets, zero redirect): Simpaisa
- Partial support (one wallet, or redirect-based flow): Several mid-tier local gateways
- No support: Stripe, Checkout.com, Nium, and most global platforms

The "no redirect" distinction matters more than most merchants realise. Redirect-based wallet flows, where the customer is pushed to a third-party page to complete payment, produce measurably higher abandonment rates. A clean, in-checkout wallet experience keeps the customer inside your funnel and reduces the cognitive friction that kills conversions on mobile.

Simpaisa's single API connects merchants to 98% of mobile wallet users across Pakistan, with no redirect in the payment flow. For e-commerce and app businesses targeting Pakistan's mobile-first consumer base, this is a direct, quantifiable conversion rate lever, not a nice-to-have.

Payment Gateway for E-Commerce vs. Apps vs. Marketplaces

Different business models have fundamentally different gateway requirements. Choosing a gateway built for a different use case than yours is a common and expensive mistake.

E-Commerce Stores (Shopify, WooCommerce, Custom)

Your priority is checkout conversion and minimal cart abandonment. Requirements: redirect-free flows, native wallet + card support, fast settlement, and a no-code payment link option for smaller merchants. Plugin availability for Shopify and WooCommerce is a practical prerequisite, but not every provider has maintained these integrations.

Mobile Applications

Your priority is SDK quality and in-app payment latency. Requirements: a lightweight API with minimal round-trip latency, optimised OTP flows, and robust error handling. Any friction in mobile checkout, extra screens, redirect loops, or OTP timeouts will depress your conversion rate. Pakistan's mobile internet infrastructure, while improving, still creates latency sensitivity that gateway APIs need to be engineered for.

Marketplaces and Multi-Sided Platforms

Your priority is split payments, bulk payouts, and reconciliation. Requirements: the ability to collect from buyers and disburse to sellers, vendors, riders, or freelancers, ideally through the same unified platform. A gateway that handles acquiring but not payouts forces your engineering team to maintain two separate integrations, two separate dashboards, and two separate reconciliation workflows.

This third category is where most Pakistani businesses hit infrastructure limits. The majority of local gateways are collecting-only products. They have no payout API. Businesses in this category, marketplaces, ride-hailing platforms, e-commerce aggregators, and gig economy operators need a platform that handles both sides of the money flow. Simpaisa's payment acquiring infrastructure is built explicitly for this, combining collecting and disbursing under a single API and a single integration effort.

How to Integrate a Payment Gateway: Step-by-Step Overview

For CTOs and technical leads evaluating integration complexity, here is a realistic overview of what the process involves across most Pakistani gateway providers:

Step 1: Account Setup and KYC (1–5 business days). Submit business registration documents, banking details, and compliance information. The timeline depends heavily on how complete your documentation is upfront.
Step 2: API Key Generation and Sandbox Access. Receive test credentials and access to a sandbox environment to simulate transactions. The quality of sandbox documentation varies enormously. This is your first real signal of how good the production experience will be
Step 3: Integration Build (2–5 days for experienced developers). Connect your frontend checkout and backend order management system to the gateway's REST API. With clean documentation and a well-structured API, a competent developer completes standard card + wallet flows within this window.
Step 4: Webhook Configuration Set up real-time event notifications for payment success, failure, refund, and chargeback events. Poorly documented webhooks are the single most common source of integration delays.
Step 5: UAT and Compliance Review Test all payment scenarios in staging**.** The gateway's compliance team reviews your integration for PCI DSS adherence before approving production access.
Step 6: Go Live Switch to production credentials, run a live validation transaction, and activate.

Total timeline**: 7 days** with a provider offering strong developer support, clean documentation, and a streamlined compliance process. Up to **4–6 weeks** with providers that have long compliance queues, fragmented documentation, or legacy API architectures.

Source://www.simpaisa.com/

Pro Tip: Before signing any gateway contract, ask to see a working sandbox environment. If the sandbox is broken, incomplete, or undocumented, treat it as a direct signal about the quality of their production engineering support.

Simpaisa vs. PayFast vs. Swich vs. PayPro Comparison

This is the comparison Pakistani businesses conduct most frequently. Here is an objective breakdown without promotional language:

Criteria	Simpaisa	PayFast	Swich	PayPro
Card Acceptance	Visa, MC, UnionPay	Visa, MC	Visa, MC	Visa, MC
JazzCash	Yes Native	Yes	Partial	Yes
Easypaisa	Yes Native	Yes	Partial	Yes
Raast / IBFT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Payout / Disbursement API	Yes Full	Limited	Yes	No
Cross-Border Acquiring	Yes 5+ markets	No	Yes	No
Remittance Rails	Yes	No	No	No
Go-Live Timeline	Days	2–3 weeks	2–4 weeks	2–3 weeks
SBP Licensed	(via UBL/Published)	Yes	Yes	Yes
PCI DSS	Yes-V4.0.1	Yes	Yes	Yes
ISO 27001	Yes-2022	Not confirmed	Not confirmed	Not confirmed
No-Code Payment Links	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes

The honest read:

PayFast is a solid domestic option for merchants who only need Pakistan-focused payment collection. It has good wallet coverage and a reasonable developer experience. Its ceiling is geography; no cross-border rails and limited payout infrastructure make it unsuitable for platforms or businesses with international operations.

Switch competes more directly at the enterprise and cross-border level. Its wallet coverage is less complete for domestic flows, and its onboarding timeline is among the longer ones in this group. International merchants with light domestic wallet requirements may find it workable.

PayPro functions well for straightforward collection use cases. The absence of a payout API makes it unsuitable for any business that needs to disburse funds to marketplaces, gig platforms, or any B2B disbursement workflow.

Simpaisa's differentiation is scope: a single API covering acquiring, disbursing, and remittance across Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Iraq with the shortest go-live timeline in the market and the broadest regulatory coverage (PCI DSS V4.0.1 + ISO 27001:2022).

Expert Insight: Why Most Businesses Get This Wrong

Most merchants evaluate payment gateways on MDR alone. That is the wrong metric. The real cost of a gateway is your effective cost per successful transaction, which factors in your authorization rate, your checkout abandonment rate from UX friction, your FX markup on settlements, and the engineering hours spent maintaining a fragmented multi-provider integration. A gateway charging 2.5% MDR with a 95% authorization rate and zero redirects often costs less, and earns more, than one charging 1.9% MDR with an 82% auth rate and a redirect-based wallet flow. In Pakistan's mobile-first market, that UX gap alone can account for 10–15% in lost conversions at checkout, a number that dwarfs any headline MDR difference.

Verdict: Which Payment Gateway Should You Choose?

There is no universal answer, but there is a clear decision framework based on business type and growth trajectory.

Choose **Simpaisa** if:

- You need JazzCash and Easypaisa with zero redirect flows
- You operate a marketplace, platform, ride-hailing app, or any business that needs both
- collecting and disbursing
- You are a global or regional company entering Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, or Iraq and
- need a single API that works across all markets
- You need cross-border remittance rails alongside domestic payment acquiring
- Go-live speed is a competitive priority.

Choose **PayFast** if:

- You are a Pakistan-only business with straightforward collection needs and no payout requirements

Choose **Switch** if:

- You are an international merchant prioritising cross-border rails and can accommodate a longer onboarding process

Choose **Checkout.com** or **Stripe if:**

- Your customers pay exclusively with international cards, you do not need local wallet support, and you are not operating as a locally licensed entity in Pakistan

The trajectory of Pakistan's market is unambiguous. SBP data shows digital transaction volumes growing over 40% year-on-year. Raast is accelerating bank-to-bank payment adoption. Mobile wallets are penetrating Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities at a pace. The gateway that covers all of these rails, not just international cards, is the one that future-proofs your payments infrastructure for the next three to five years.

Source://www.simpaisa.com/

Conclusion

Choosing a payment gateway in Pakistan in 2026 is a strategic infrastructure decision, not a commodity procurement exercise. The right gateway determines your checkout conversion rate, your operational complexity, your settlement speed, and your ability to scale into new markets without rebuilding your payments stack.

Three things matter most: wallet coverage is non-negotiable for any business targeting Pakistani consumers; payout capability separates basic gateways from full-stack payment platforms; and go-live speed is a real competitive differentiator when market windows are short.

A fragmented integration, separate providers for collecting, disbursing, and cross-border transfers, costs more in engineering overhead and reconciliation than a unified API platform.

Start with your use case, not the price sheet.

Ready to see which Simpaisa plan fits your business?
Get a free consultation with our payments team and go from evaluation to live integration in a very short time.

FAQ: 10 Most Asked Questions About Pakistan Payment Gateways

1.What is the best payment gateway in Pakistan for small businesses?
For small businesses, the best gateway combines zero monthly fees, fast integration, and full wallet support. If you anticipate growth or if you will eventually need disbursements, choosing a platform with that headroom upfront prevents a costly migration later.

2.Do Pakistan payment gateways support JazzCash and Easypaisa?
Not all of them do. Major international gateways like Stripe and Checkout.com have no JazzCash or Easypaisa integration. For any business targeting Pakistani consumers, native wallet support is essential.JazzCash alone has 40M+ registered users, many of whom do not use cards as their primary payment method.

3.How long does payment gateway integration take in Pakistan?
It varies significantly by provider. Some take 4–6 weeks due to compliance queues and fragmented documentation. API-first platforms with streamlined compliance processes can get you live in within days. Always ask for a realistic go-live estimate and check developer reviews before committing.

4.What is MDR, and how does it affect my margins?
MDR stands for Merchant Discount Rate, the percentage fee charged on each transaction. In Pakistan, MDR typically ranges from 1.5% to 3.5% depending on payment method, card network, and business volume. Always ask for your effective rate across your full transaction mix, not just the headline card rate. Wallet MDR is usually lower than card MDR.

5.Is Raast integrated with payment gateways in Pakistan?
Yes, several gateways now support Raast SBP's Instant Payment System for real-time bank-to-bank transfers. Raast enables zero-cost transfers and is increasingly important for both B2B payments and higher-value consumer transactions. Confirm Raast support explicitly when evaluating any provider.

Source://www.simpaisa.com/

6.Can I accept international payments through a Pakistani payment gateway?
Most local gateways are domestic-only. For cross-border payment acceptance and international settlements, including USD receipts and FX conversion, you need a provider with international acquiring capabilities and transparent FX handling. Always ask for the settlement FX markup rate, not just the MDR.

7.What is the difference between a payment gateway and a payment aggregator?
A payment gateway connects your checkout to payment networks for authorisation and settlement. A payment aggregator bundles multiple merchants under one master merchant account, simplifying onboarding but sometimes reducing control over settlement terms and compliance scope. A licensed Payment Service Operator (PSO), the SBP licensing category operates at a higher compliance tier with direct regulatory accountability.

8.Do I need PCI DSS compliance as a merchant?
If your integration is built correctly, the gateway handles most of the PCI DSS scope on your behalf. However, your specific PCI obligations depend on your integration method: hosted, redirect, or direct API. Always confirm the PCI scope implications of your chosen integration approach before going live.

9.What happens if a payment fails? How are failure rates managed?
Payment failures in Pakistan are more common than in mature markets due to wallet OTP timeouts, mobile network latency, and card authorisation gaps. Better gateways use intelligent transaction routing to retry through alternate rails. Ask any provider for their reported transaction success rate and ask whether that figure is net of retries or first-attempt only.

10.Can a payment gateway also handle payouts to freelancers or vendors?
Standard gateways cannot. Payout capability requires a separate disbursement API or a unified platform that handles both acquiring and disbursing under one integration. For marketplaces and platforms that need to pay out to suppliers, creators, drivers, or freelancers, look specifically for a provider with a bulk payout API alongside its collection capabilities.

TALK TO US:

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