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Pakistan And China: **Charting A Shared Future Through Strategic Partnership**



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“How China's 15th Five-Year Plan Opens New Horizons for Bilateral Cooperation”

Introduction

As the world approaches 2026, a momentous milestone looms on the horizon: the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This anniversary is not merely a ceremonial marker but a gateway to a new era of "ironclad" friendship, coinciding with the launch of Beijing's strategic blueprint for the latter half of the decade—the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030).



The recent plenary sessions in Beijing have laid out a definitive economic roadmap that inaugurates this new plan, a period the Chinese leadership views as decisive for national rejuvenation. For Pakistan, this strategic pivot offers unprecedented opportunities. As China transitions towards high-quality development driven by "New Quality Productive Forces," the synergies between China's modernization journey and Pakistan's development goals have never been clearer. This article explores how the convergence of these two nations' destinies will shape a prosperous, shared future.

China's Strategic Blueprint: A New Era Begins

The 15th Five-Year Plan represents a sophisticated evolution in China's economic governance. Moving away from the infrastructure-heavy playbooks of the past, the 2026 agenda sanctions a "more proactive" fiscal policy paired with a "moderately loose" monetary policy. This combination signals Beijing's intent to support growth through calculated liquidity and targeted spending rather than indiscriminate stimulus.

Crucially, the focus has shifted towards "effectiveness enhancement." Fiscal resources are now mandated to flow into sectors yielding high social returns: advanced education, public healthcare, and comprehensive social security. The objective is twofold: to alleviate household financial anxiety—thereby unlocking domestic consumption—and to cultivate a high-quality workforce capable of driving an innovation-led economy.



At the heart of this blueprint is the expansion of domestic demand, particularly within the service sector and the "silver economy" catering to an ageing population. This shift creates a massive consumption ecosystem that is resilient, dynamic, and open to high-quality imports from trusted partners like Pakistan.

The Convergence of Two Modernization Dreams

While China embarks on its 15th Five-Year Plan, Pakistan is rigorously advancing its own "Uraan Pakistan" development agenda. The ideological convergence between the two nations is striking. Both leaderships prioritize a people-first approach, comprehensive reform, and the balancing of development with security.

A critical area of shared focus is agriculture. During its 14th Five-Year Plan, China achieved a historic victory by lifting 98.99 million rural residents out of poverty, eradicating absolute poverty entirely. This success offers a tangible roadmap for Pakistan, where agriculture remains the backbone of the economy.

Key Learning Opportunity: China's "Targeted Poverty Alleviation" strategy, which identifies needs at the household level, offers a replicable model for Pakistan's rural development programs. Beijing stands ready to share this governance experience, transitioning from aid to capacity building.



Economic Corridor 2.0: Building Tomorrow Together

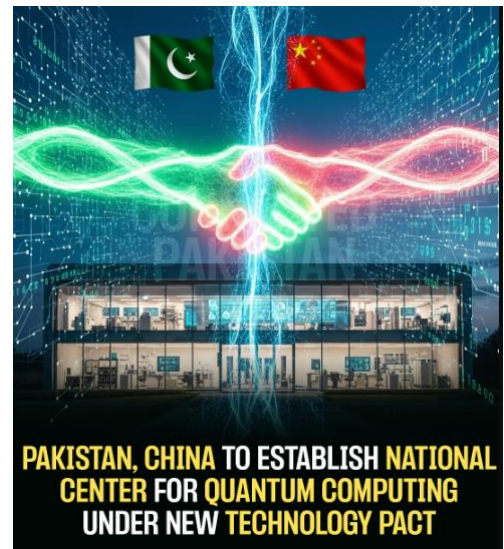
The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is entering its "Phase 2.0," characterized by industrial cooperation and technological integration. The recently issued *Action Plan to Foster an Even Closer China-Pakistan Community with a Shared Future in the New Era (2025-2029)* identifies 63 specific measures across seven areas, aligning perfectly with the priorities of China's real economy.

Tangible results are already visible in industrial cooperation:

- **Haier-Ruba Special Economic Zone:** Achieved an output value of US\$400 million last year, creating 6,000 jobs. A new home appliance park is planned with a US\$400 million investment, expected to create over 10,000 additional jobs.
- **Challenge Group Textile Park:** A planned US\$150 million investment is set to generate an annual export volume of US\$400 million and create nearly 20,000 jobs.
- **Balakot Hydropower Project:** Recently achieving river closure, this project has created over 2,000 local jobs and will provide green electricity to 1.8 million people upon completion.

Technology and Innovation: The New Frontier

China's drive for "New Quality Productive Forces" emphasizes breakthroughs in core technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and 6G telecommunications. The 15th Five-Year Plan anticipates that future-oriented industries like biomanufacturing and commercial aerospace will create multi-trillion-yuan markets.





For Pakistan, with its burgeoning youth population and growing IT sector, this presents a unique opportunity to integrate into the digital supply chain. Cooperation is deepening in big data, digital governance, and the "low-altitude economy." By partnering with Chinese tech giants, Pakistan can accelerate its digital transformation, moving from basic IT services to high-value digital manufacturing and smart city solutions.

Trade and Investment: Opening Doors Wider

China has remained Pakistan's largest trading partner and investor for many consecutive years. The resilience of this trade relationship is evident in recent statistics from the first three quarters of the year:

- **Marine Products:** Exports to China rose by 23%
- **Rice:** Exports surged by 63%
- **Sesame:** Exports witnessed a remarkable 87% increase

Looking ahead, the two nations are working to upgrade the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement. China's commitment to "high-standard opening up" includes granting zero-tariff treatment on 100% of tariff lines to least developed countries, a policy spirit from which Pakistan stands to benefit significantly as a strategic partner. This opens the vast Chinese consumer market to Pakistani textiles, agriculture, and manufactured goods like never before.

Agriculture and Poverty Alleviation: Seeds of Prosperity

Beyond industrial zones, cooperation is taking root in the soil. Recognizing that the modernization of agriculture is a shared priority, China has launched specific initiatives to support Pakistani farmers directly.



The "Sweet Initiative" targets major date palm-producing regions, donating machinery and training to directly benefit 13,000 farming households. Furthermore, contract farming models are being expanded to facilitate the export of high-quality Pakistani agricultural products to Chinese markets. On the social welfare front, the "Strengthening Maternal and Neonatal Health" project in Balochistan is distributing over 80,000 pieces of medical equipment, benefiting more than 6 million local people.

Global Partnership: Standing Together on the World Stage

In an era where unilateralism and protectionism threaten the global economic order, Pakistan and China stand as pillars of multilateralism. China's pledge to actively remove market access barriers in key service sectors—telecommunications, healthcare, and finance—demonstrates a commitment to inclusive economic globalization.

Both nations are jointly promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. By aligning their developmental strategies, they are not only insulating their economies from external shocks but also contributing to global solutions in climate change and digital governance. The partnership serves as a model for South-South cooperation, proving that modernization does not have to equal Westernization.

Conclusion: A Blueprint for Prosperity

"The magnificent scroll of Chinese modernization is unfolding... We stand ready to deepen exchanges and cooperation for shared development and progress with our ironclad friend Pakistan."

The year 2026 marks a historic starting point. As China executes its 15th Five-Year Plan and Pakistan accelerates its own reforms, the "all-weather strategic cooperative partnership" is evolving from a relationship based on geopolitical necessity to one driven by shared economic prosperity and modernization.



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From the high-tech industrial parks of CPEC 2.0 to the date farms of Balochistan, the blueprint for the future is being written today. By seizing the opportunities presented by China's structural transformation, Pakistan can catalyze its own national rejuvenation. Together, the two nations are not just witnessing history; they are writing it, hand in hand, towards a shared future of peace, development, and mutual benefit.