

[AS INTRODUCED IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY]

A
BILL

to provide for the transformation of Pakistan into a digital nation, enabling a digital society, digital economy, and digital governance

WHEREAS, it is expedient to enable the people of Pakistan to become a digital nation by leveraging the transformative power of digital technologies, responsible use of data, innovative service delivery models, and robust digital public infrastructure to accelerate sustainable economic development, improve citizen well-being, and modernise governance frameworks for efficient and effective public service delivery;

AND WHEREAS, it is expedient to create a forward-looking digital society, foster a thriving digital economy, and establish a collaborative digital governance ecosystem, with secure, inclusive, and interoperable digital public infrastructure as a key enabler supporting innovation, connectivity, and seamless integration across sectors;

AND WHEREAS, the establishment of the National Digital Commission and the Pakistan Digital Authority is necessary which will provide strategic direction, governance, and operational oversight required to achieve these objectives and for matters connected therewith and ancillary thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:—

CHAPTER 1
PRELIMINARY

1. Short title, extent, and commencement.— (1) This Act shall be called the Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2024.

(2) It shall extend to the whole of Pakistan.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.— In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,—

(a) "Authority" means the Pakistan Digital Authority established under section 6;

(b) "Chairperson" means the Chairperson of the Authority appointed under section 7;

(c) "Commission" means the National Digital Commission constituted under section 3;

(d) "Committee" means the Strategic Oversight Committee established under Section 9;

(e) "data exchange layer" means a secure and interoperable digital framework that facilitates the standardised sharing and integration of data amongst government entities and public sector organisations. It provides secure interfaces for private enterprises to access public services and data as required and ensures data integrity, privacy, and accessibility without requiring private enterprises to share their proprietary data;

(f) "data governance" means the processes, roles, and responsibilities that ensure the effective and efficient management of data;

- (g) "digital economy" means the economic activities, transactions, and interactions conducted through digital platforms and infrastructures to encompass the digital transformation of traditional sectors and the development of new digital services, products, and business models. The digital economy is driven by data, digital identity, and secure, scalable digital public infrastructures, fostering inclusion, innovation and economic growth across both public and private sectors;
- (h) "digital identity" means a legal, secure, verifiable credentials issued to an eligible individual, enabling access to digital services, transactions, and interactions which shall be developed, issued and managed by National Database and Registration Authority under the National Database and Registration Authority Ordinance, 2000 (VIII of 2000). For legal entities, it shall be based on data maintained by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan or other relevant Federal or Provincial Government entities;
- (i) "digital governance" means integrating and using digital technologies, data and digital public infrastructures to enhance the transparency, accountability and efficiency of government decision-making processes and service delivery. It involves leveraging digital platforms to improve the performance, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of public services, fostering citizen engagement and enabling data-driven policies to support sustainable development and innovation in governance;
- (j) "digital nation" means a nation where urban and rural citizens, governments, and businesses are enabled through digital technologies and the responsible use of data, fostering a digital society that generates value for all stakeholders, supports sustainable economic growth and promotes efficient governance;
- (k) "Digital Nation Fund" means the fund created under section 13;
- (l) "digital public infrastructure" or "DPI" means foundational, secure, and interoperable digital systems that enable public and private sector services and support governance, economic activities, and societal needs. It includes systems such as digital identity, data exchange platforms, digital payments, cloud-based government services, and open data platforms. It ensures inclusivity, accessibility, security, and efficiency, fostering innovation and sustainable growth across the digital ecosystem;
- (m) "digital society" means a society where individuals, businesses, and governments use digital technologies across all aspects of life, including governance, economy, education and social interactions, fostering inclusivity, innovation and efficiency through secure digital infrastructure;
- (n) "digital transformation" refers to a strategic overhaul of government operations, public services, and economic activities by adopting digital technologies, data-driven decision-making, and innovative solutions to create a digital society, digital economy and digital governance aligned with the national digital masterplan;
- (o) "digitalisation" means the integration of digital technologies into existing government systems, operations and services to enhance efficiency, service delivery and governance;
- (p) "Division concerned" means the Division to which the business of information technology and telecommunications stands allocated;

- (q) "emerging technologies" means innovative and rapidly evolving technological advancements that have the potential to significantly impact economic growth, societal development, and governance structures;
- (r) "implementation plan" means the detailed plans for each sectoral plan outlined in the national digital masterplan and includes all necessary projects, resources, timelines and risk management strategies required for successful execution of the national digital masterplan under section 11;
- (s) "Member" means a Member of the Authority appointed under Section 7;
- (t) "national data strategy" means a comprehensive framework that sets policies, standards, and guidelines for managing, sharing, and using data securely and responsibly across sectors to foster innovation, economic growth and governance improvements ensuring compliance with national and international standards;
- (u) "national digital masterplan" or "masterplan" means a comprehensive, strategic blueprint designed to transform Pakistan into a digital nation by fostering a digital society, digital economy and digital governance. The masterplan provides a cohesive framework for digital transformation across federal, provincial, and local levels, ensuring inclusivity, adaptability and alignment with international standards and emerging digital trends. The masterplan includes strategic frameworks, sectoral plans, digital economy development plans, implementation plans and governance frameworks that promote innovation, collaboration and sustainability across all sectors, as approved under section 11;
- (v) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules or regulations, as the case may be, made under this Act;
- (w) "regulations" means regulations made under this Act;
- (x) "rules" means rules made under this Act; and
- (y) "sectoral plan" means the specific digital transformation roadmaps for key sectors, including but not limited to health, education, agriculture, finance, industries, commerce, and governance, as provided in section 11.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL DIGITAL COMMISSION

3. Establishment of the Commission.— (1) Upon the commencement of this Act, there shall stand established a Commission to be called as the National Digital Commission.

(2) The Commission shall prescribe the required policy, provide governance and ensure necessary coordination amongst federal, provincial, and sectoral bodies to achieve the objectives of a digital nation and aligning national digital transformation with economic growth, effective governance and societal development.

4. Composition of the Commission.— (1) The Commission shall consist of the following, namely:—

S. No	Membership	Status
(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	Prime Minister of Pakistan;	<i>Chairman</i>
2.	Chief Minister of Balochistan;	<i>Member</i>
3.	Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;	<i>Member</i>
4.	Chief Minister of Punjab;	<i>Member</i>
5.	Chief Minister of Sindh;	<i>Member</i>
6.	Minister-in-charge of the Division concerned;	<i>Vice Chairman</i>
7.	Minister-in-charge of the Division to which business of planning and development stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
8.	Minister-in-charge of the Division to which business of finance stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
9.	Minister-in-charge of the Division to which business of commerce stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
10.	Minister-in-charge of the Division to which business of interior stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
11.	Minister-in-charge of the Division to which business of economic affairs stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
12.	Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue;	<i>Member</i>
13.	Chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority;	<i>Member</i>
14.	Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority;	<i>Member</i>
15.	Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan;	<i>Member</i>
16.	Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan; and	<i>Member</i>
17.	Chairperson of the Pakistan Digital Authority.	<i>Secretary</i>

(2) A Chief Minister, in his absence, may nominate a provincial minister or the Chief Secretary to attend the meeting of the Commission.

(3) Where business of a Division does not stand allocated to any Federal Minister, Minister of State or an Adviser and is in direct charge of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister may nominate Minister-in-charge of another Division to act as member of the Commission till such time regular Minister-in-charge of that Division is appointed.

(4) The Commission may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint additional members to the Commission as deemed necessary to further the objectives of this Act.

(5) The Chairman may require the attendance of any relevant person by special invitation, including but not limited to Ministers-in-charge of relevant ministries, experts, or officials whose expertise or participation is deemed necessary to support the Commission's deliberations on any matter under discussion.

(6) The Commission shall hold a meeting at least once every quarter and may further meet as many times as necessary at the direction of the Chairman.

(7) The quorum for a meeting of the Commission shall constitute at least three-fourths of the members of the Commission, and must include the presence of the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice Chairman.

5. Functions of the Commission.— The Commission shall—

- (a) approve the national digital masterplan and its implementation plans, provide strategic direction and governance to the Authority and coordinate with all relevant federal and provincial government entities, as well as regulatory bodies, to ensure a unified and collaborative approach to digital transformation across all levels of government;
- (b) issue directives to entities to align their strategic direction, policies, operations, and digital initiatives with the national digital masterplan, addressing inter-jurisdictional challenges and supporting effective implementation;
- (c) ensure that the Authority has the requisite support, enabling conditions and resources to implement the masterplan effectively; and
- (d) review cases of non-compliance with the masterplan referred by the Authority or Committee and may grant exceptions or issue further directives as necessary to ensure alignment with the masterplan.

CHAPTER 3

PAKISTAN DIGITAL AUTHORITY

6. Establishment of the Authority.— (1) Upon the commencement of this Act, there shall stand established an Authority to be called as the Pakistan Digital Authority carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Authority shall be a corporate body with perpetual succession and a common seal. It shall possess the administrative and financial powers necessary to perform its functions, including the authority to enter into agreements and contracts, manage and utilise its funds, acquire, hold and dispose of both movable and immovable property and to sue and be sued by its name, subject to the provisions of this Act.

(3) The Authority shall have all such powers as are necessary or incidental to the performance of its functions under this Act, including but not limited to the power to manage its internal operations and take any other actions that are consistent with the objectives of this Act.

(4) The headquarters of the Authority shall be in Islamabad, and it may establish its offices anywhere in Pakistan as it may deem necessary.

7. Governance of the Authority.— (1) The Authority shall consist of a Chairperson and two additional Members to be appointed by the Prime Minister. The Commission may, upon a justified request from the Authority, increase or decrease the number of Members, subject to a maximum of five Members.

(2) The powers and functions of the Authority as provided in this Act shall be exercised in the name of the Authority by the Authority, comprising of Chairperson, and the Members, which shall act through the Chairperson who shall be the chief executive of the Authority.

(3) The Chairperson and Members shall be eminent professionals with recognised expertise, integrity, and substantial experience in digital transformation, technology policy and governance.

(4) The Prime Minister shall appoint the Chairperson and Members each for a term of four years, and each shall be eligible for re-appointment for up to one additional term.

(5) No person shall be appointed or continue to act as Chairperson or Member if he –

- (a) is or has been, by a competent court of law, declared insolvent or an application for this purpose is pending adjudication;
- (b) is or has been, by a competent court of law, convicted for an offence involving moral turpitude;
- (c) is or has been, by a competent court of law, declared insane or of unsound mind; or
- (d) has been dismissed, removed or compulsorily retired from service of a post in the service of Pakistan.

(6) The Chairperson or any Member may resign by tendering a written resignation to the Prime Minister and may be removed by the Prime Minister for reasons to be recorded.

(7) In the event of a vacancy due to the completion of tenure, death, resignation or removal of a Chairperson or any Member, the Prime Minister shall appoint a Chairperson or Member within ninety days. In case of vacancy of the Chairperson, the Prime Minister may appoint one of the Members as the Acting Chairperson to assume all roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson until a replacement is appointed and takes charge.

(8) No act or proceedings of the Authority shall be invalid merely due to the existence of a vacancy, whether in the office of the Chairperson or a Member, or a defect in the constitution of the Authority.

(9) The Chairperson and Members shall adhere to the governance, ethical and operational standards and comply with a conflict-of-interest management policy as may be prescribed by the rules, to ensure impartiality and integrity in decision-making. They must disclose any potential conflicts of interest at the time of appointment and throughout their tenure.

(10) The Chairperson and Members shall be entitled to such remuneration and benefits as may be determined by the Prime Minister.

(11) The Authority shall meet at such time and place and in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations, provided that until regulations are made in this behalf, such meetings shall be convened by the Chairperson.

(12) At any meeting of the Authority, the quorum shall be two Members including the Chairperson.

(13) The Authority shall endeavour to reach a consensus on all questions arising at any meeting. However, if consensus cannot be achieved, decisions shall be made by a majority vote of at least half of the Members present, including the Chairperson:

Provided that the Chairperson shall, in case of tie have a casting vote.

(14) The Authority may create, abolish, upgrade, downgrade or re-designate posts, from time to time, as per regulations, and prescribe by regulations the qualifications, experience and other terms and conditions of service for appointment thereto and may appoint advisers, consultants, officers and other staff members in the prescribed manner.

(15) The Chairperson may constitute working groups, committees, councils, advisory boards, task forces and technical panels as may be required.

8. Powers and functions of the Authority.— The Authority shall have the responsibility to perform all tasks and exercise all powers necessary to fulfil its objectives under this Act. The Authority shall —

- (a) develop, implement, monitor and periodically update the national digital masterplan, including sectoral plans and implementation plans, to ensure alignment with the strategic guidelines of the Commission;
- (b) subject to section 27, issue and enforce regulations, guidelines, and standards necessary to implement the masterplan. The Authority may also issue directives with the approval of the Commission, ensuring alignment with the masterplan;
- (c) facilitate coordination among federal, provincial and local governments, sectoral bodies, regulatory authorities and private stakeholders to ensure alignment with the masterplan;
- (d) establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for digital transformation projects and programs under the masterplan and provide regular updates to the Commission on progress, compliance and proposed corrective actions;
- (e) review plans and projects relevant to the masterplan and recommend their approval to the Commission for public sector entities involving digital components, ensuring strategic alignment with the masterplan;
- (f) advise the Division concerned on laws, rules, regulations and policies necessary to align with the masterplan and international best practices, collaborating with legislative and regulatory bodies to facilitate their enactment;

- (g) regulate areas assigned by the Commission, including data management and governance, artificial intelligence, virtual assets and other emerging technologies, ensuring alignment with the masterplan and shall ensure that there is no overlap with the mandate or jurisdiction of other regulatory bodies and no conflict with relevant laws or existing regulatory frameworks;
- (h) develop and enforce a national data strategy and comprehensive data governance framework within government entities and across public and private sectors, covering all aspects of data governance and management subject to the provisions of this Act and shall ensure that designated data custodians shall retain control and responsibility over their respective datasets, while providing secure and standardized frameworks for data exchange with other stakeholders;
- (i) recommend governance, standards and operational compliance of cloud infrastructure within the public sector, ensuring alignment with national cloud policies;
- (j) facilitate the development of a digital economy strategy in collaboration with relevant stakeholders;
- (k) ensure the development, strategic oversight, and adoption of core digital public infrastructure, including digital identity, data exchange layers, cloud infrastructure, and other foundational technologies to enhance digital governance and service delivery;
- (l) promote and facilitate digital innovation by recommending policies and establishing frameworks that encourage the responsible use of emerging technologies, fostering innovation ecosystems and supporting research and development as required to advance the objectives of the masterplan;
- (m) develop and promote a national citizen experience strategy, setting comprehensive design standards, guidelines, and frameworks for all public sector digital services, ensuring accessibility, security, and a seamless user experience;
- (n) ensure ownership and strategic oversight of the digital citizen journeys and service delivery across all public sector digital services, ensuring alignment with the masterplan; and
- (o) monitor and report to the Commission and the Committee on the progress and impact of digital initiatives using key performance indicators and milestones given in the masterplan and provide recommendations for optimisation.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

9. Strategic Oversight Committee.— (1) There shall be a Strategic Oversight Committee to monitor and evaluate the performance of the Authority, compliance and alignment with the strategic objectives formulated by the Commission and make necessary recommendations to the Commission.

(2) The Committee shall consist of the following, namely: —

S. No	Membership	Status
(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	Minister-in-charge of the Division concerned;	<i>Convenor</i>
2.	Secretary of the Division concerned;	<i>Member-cum-secretary</i>
3.	Secretary of the Division to which business of the finance stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
4.	Secretary of the Division to which business of planning and development stands allocated;	<i>Member</i>
5.	A representative of the Special Investment Facilitation Council not below the rank of an officer in BPS-21 or equivalent;	<i>Member</i>
6.	Four independent members from the private sector with relevant experience.	<i>Members</i>

(3) Where the business of the Division concerned does not stand allocated to any Federal Minister, Minister of State or an Adviser and is in direct charge of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister may nominate a Minister-in-charge of another Division to act as convenor of the Committee till such time regular Minister-in-charge of the Division concerned is appointed.

(4) The Prime Minister shall appoint or remove the independent members against S. No. 6 of sub-section (2) for a term of three years, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Prime Minister. These members may include at least one expert representing each of the telecommunication, finance, and information technology/software sectors.

(5) No person shall be appointed or continue to act as an independent member if he —

- (a) is or has been, by a competent court of law, declared insolvent or an application for this purpose is pending adjudication;
- (b) is or has been, by a competent court of law, convicted for an offence involving moral turpitude;
- (c) is or has been, by a competent court of law, declared insane or of unsound mind; or
- (d) has been dismissed, removed or compulsorily retired from service of a post in the service of Pakistan.

(6) No member of the Committee shall have a direct or indirect interest in any entity that is under contract with the Authority. All members must disclose any conflict of interest at the time of their appointment and throughout their term, adhering to the rules to ensure impartiality and integrity in decision-making.

(7) The meetings of the Committee shall be presided over by the Convener, and in the Convener's absence, the Secretary of the Division concerned shall preside over the meeting.

(8) The Committee shall meet at least once every quarter and as often as needed to fulfil its responsibilities under this Act.

(9) The Convenor of the Committee may require any officer of the Authority responsible for the subject-matter under consideration to attend specific Committee meetings as a non-voting participant to provide information, insights or clarification on matters being reviewed by the Committee.

(10) The members of the Committee shall, for attending meetings, be entitled to such honorarium and travelling allowance as may be prescribed by regulations.

10. Functions of the Committee.— The Committee shall—

- (a) provide independent review of the performance of the Authority to the Commission in terms of its actions being in alignment with the masterplan and the directives issued by the Commission;
- (b) review the reports and information submitted by the Authority as directed by the Commission to support the Committee's oversight role without interfering with the autonomy of the Authority;
- (c) provide independent review of the financial management of the Authority to the Commission to promote transparency, accountability, and sound financial practices; and
- (d) submit an annual performance report to the Commission detailing the performance of the Authority, compliance, progress, financial status and any recommendations for improvement and may also submit interim reports as it may deem necessary or upon request by the Commission.

CHAPTER 5 NATIONAL DIGITAL MASTERPLAN

11. National digital masterplan.— (1) The Authority shall develop and propose to the Commission for approval a comprehensive masterplan called the national digital masterplan.

(2) The masterplan shall be a comprehensive strategic blueprint to transform Pakistan into a digital nation by fostering a digital society, digital economy, and digital governance. It shall be the central framework guiding digital initiatives, regulatory standards, and guidelines, ensuring a unified digital agenda, eliminating redundancy and maximising resource efficiency.

(3) The national digital masterplan shall include but not be limited to the following components, namely:—

- (a) strategic framework, outlining the vision, guiding principles, objectives and priority areas for the digital transformation of Pakistan;

- (b) sectoral plans, to provide specific digital transformation roadmaps for key sectors, including but not limited to health, social protection, education, agriculture, finance, industries, trade, commerce and governance;
- (c) digital economy development plan, to outline the strategies for the development of a robust digital economy;
- (d) implementation plans for each sectoral plan, outlining all necessary projects, resources, timelines, and risk management strategies for successful execution. Implementation plans shall provide a clear framework for execution, monitoring and evaluation and shall be developed in consultation with the relevant Divisions; and
- (e) technology standards, reference architectures, and governance frameworks to develop policies, standards, and guidelines for the digital public infrastructure, ensuring compliance and a seamless user experience.

(4) When developing the masterplan, the Authority shall consult with relevant stakeholders, including sectoral bodies, regulatory authorities and federal and provincial entities. The consultation process shall be comprehensive and aimed at achieving broad consensus on the digital transformation strategy.

(5) The Authority shall conduct a comprehensive review of the masterplan at least annually, or as often as required, to account for digital trends, technological advancements, evolving national priorities and stakeholder feedback. Pursuant to a review, the Authority may propose necessary amendments in the masterplan for the approval of the Commission.

12. Implementation, compliance and enforcement.— (1) All entities identified in the masterplan shall align their policies, operations, and digital initiatives pertinent to the masterplan with its objectives and directives. Each such entity shall engage with the Authority to develop alignment plans, including specific actions, timelines, milestones, and any necessary capacity-building measures to ensure compliance with the masterplan.

(2) The Authority shall monitor the implementation of the masterplan, assess compliance, and submit periodic reports to the Commission, highlighting progress, gaps, and non-compliance. The Authority may also recommend corrective measures or sanctions to the Commission.

(3) All Ministries, Divisions, departments, public authorities, public entities, autonomous bodies and regulatory bodies shall cooperate and provide to the Authority necessary assistance to facilitate the execution of the masterplan and the implementation plans.

(4) If a public entity fails to comply with the masterplan or the directives issued by the Authority, the Authority shall issue a formal notice outlining the areas of non-compliance and the required corrective actions, along with a deadline for resolution. If non-compliance persists, the Authority shall report the matter to the Commission. The Commission may take further remedial actions as it deems necessary to ensure compliance with the masterplan.

CHAPTER 6

FUND, ACCOUNTS, AND AUDIT

13. Digital Nation Fund.— (1) There shall be created a non-lapsable fund vesting in and to be administered and controlled by the Authority to be known as the Digital Nation Fund for meeting expenses in connection with the functions and operations of the Authority under this Act.

(2) The Digital Nation Fund shall, subject to the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, 2019, consist of—

- (a) funds provided by the Federal Government for payment of salaries, establishing infrastructure, administrative, operational, and any other expenses, and running the day-to-day business of the Authority;
- (b) loans or funds to be obtained from the Federal Government or any Provincial Government or local authority or such other entity subject to approval by the Commission;
- (c) grants by the Federal Government or any Provincial Government or local authority;
- (d) aids, grants, donations, and loans negotiated and raised or otherwise obtained by the Authority from the national and international agencies, in consultation with the Division to which business of finance stands allocated and other relevant Divisions;
- (e) funds from international grants, loans, donations, and other financial instruments, including contributions from multilateral organisations, international agencies, and philanthropic organisations, specifically aimed at supporting digital transformation initiatives in Pakistan. The Authority shall seek out, apply for, and manage such funding in accordance with governance standards set by rules to advance its objectives and ensure transparency;
- (f) all other sums or property which may in any manner become payable to or vested in the Authority in respect of any matter incidental to the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions; and
- (g) income generated from investments and assets of the Authority.

(3) The Digital Nation Fund shall, subject to the Public Finance Management Act, 2019, be managed and operated in such manner and subject to such extent as may be prescribed by rules.

(4) Subject to Articles 169 and 170 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to ensure financial integrity and transparency, the Digital Nation Fund shall be subject to periodic reviews and audits by independent external auditors or other relevant bodies as determined by the Committee, ensuring compliance with financial management rules and the effective use of resources.

14. Expenditure.— The Digital Nation Fund shall be expended for—

- (a) paying any expenditure lawfully incurred by the Authority;
- (b) payment of salaries and other remunerations payable to employees, consultants, and advisers of the Authority;

- (c) paying any other expenses, costs or expenditures properly incurred or accepted by the Authority in the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers under this Act;
- (d) repaying any loans or advances obtained under this Act, along with any associated interest, charges or fees;
- (e) fulfilling any financial obligations or liabilities that arise in the execution of the functions of the Authority under this Act; and
- (f) funding strategic enabling projects and initiatives necessary to support digital transformation objectives, enhance digital public infrastructure, or improve the Authority's and its stakeholders' operational capabilities.

15. Budget, finance and audit.— (1) The Authority shall, for each financial year, prepare its budget.

(2) The budget statement shall specifically state the estimated receipts, expenditures, and the sums likely to be required from the Federal Government during the following financial year.

(3) The accounts of the Authority shall be maintained and audited in accordance with Articles 169 and 170 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

(4) In addition to the audit under sub-section (3), the Authority may require the accounts to be audited by a chartered accountant within the meaning of the Chartered Accountants Ordinance, 1961 (X of 1961).

(5) Copies of the report of the Auditor-General of Pakistan on the accounts shall be provided to the Authority, and the Authority shall make it available for public inspection on its official website.

(6) The funds of the Digital Nation Fund shall be maintained in the National Bank of Pakistan or such other scheduled banks as may be prescribed by regulations subject to the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, 2019.

16. Annual report of the Authority.— (1) The Authority shall submit an annual report to the Commission, Committee and the Division concerned within ninety days after close of the financial year, encompassing—

- (a) an audited statement of income, expenditure, and balance sheet;
- (b) an overview of the Authority's activities, achievements, and compliance with the masterplan;
- (c) an assessment of progress against key performance indicators and milestones established in the masterplan;
- (d) recommendations for future digital transformation initiatives and any corrective actions needed; and
- (e) any other relevant matters the Authority deems necessary for transparency and accountability.

(2) The Authority shall publish the annual report on its official website to ensure public access and transparency.

CHAPTER 7

GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

17. Assignment of entities.— The Commission may advise the Federal Government through the Division concerned to assign any Division, semi-autonomous or autonomous entity, including corporation, board or other relevant public sector entity, to assist the Authority in executing the masterplan or carrying out any functions necessary to achieve the objectives of this Act. The Commission may also authorise the Authority to act through such assigned entities for specific projects, works or functions as may be specified by the Commission.

18. Assignment of expertise.— During the period the Authority is developing the masterplan or, upon its approval, overseeing the implementation of any project contained in the implementation plan, the Authority may request any Division, public authority, public entity, or autonomous or regulatory body to assign an official with requisite expertise to the Authority.

19. Assistance from agencies.— (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the Authority may seek any assistance or information from any person, including but not limited to any Division, department, statutory body, corporation, or agency of the federal, provincial, or local governments, which, in its opinion, concerns any matter relating to the smooth functioning of the Authority. The requested assistance or information shall be provided to the Authority within the stipulated timeframe specified by it. If the required assistance or information is not provided within the specified timeframe, the Authority shall take further steps as provided in sub-section (2) to ensure compliance, including reporting the matter to the Commission.

(2) In cases where the Authority's directives are not adhered to, and delays in providing the requested assistance or information persist despite follow-up by the Authority, the matter may be reported to the Commission. The Commission, upon reviewing the situation, may enforce compliance by directing the relevant agency or entity to provide the required assistance or information within a specified timeframe, not exceeding ten working days from the date of the Commission's directive, unless an extension is granted under exceptional circumstances.

20. Engagement with development partners.— (1) The Authority may collaborate and enter into financial arrangements with development partners, including but not limited to international donors, multilateral organisations, or international agencies to support its functions. These arrangements may include financial grants and other technical assistance, such as training and capacity building, advisory and research services, the remuneration of staff and consultants and provision of assets, etc., without imposing financial liability on the Authority.

(2) In cases where any fiscal obligation is created on the Government of Pakistan, arrangements with development partners shall be made in consultation with the Division to which the business of economic affairs stands allocated.

21. Appointment of employees, advisers and consultants, etc. of the Authority.— (1) The Chairperson or the Authority may appoint employees, consultants, agents and technical or professional advisers as it deems necessary to perform its functions and exercise its powers under

this Act. The methods, qualifications, experience and other terms and conditions of service of such persons shall be such as may be prescribed by the regulations.

(2) The Authority shall ensure a transparent and competitive process for making appointments under sub-section (1).

(3) Employees of the Authority shall serve at the discretion of the Authority and shall be subject to disciplinary action under procedures prescribed by the regulations.

(4) All individuals appointed under this section shall be deemed public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860) but shall not be considered civil servants within the meaning of the Civil Servants Act, 1973 (LXXI of 1973), except the civil servants appointed in the Authority, who shall continue to be governed by the Civil Servants Act, 1973 (LXXI of 1973) and the rules made thereunder unless they are absorbed into the Authority as per the rules.

22. Code of conduct and ethical guidelines. — The Authority shall, as may be prescribed by regulations, establish a code of conduct and ethical guidelines for all employees, consultants and advisers to ensure integrity, impartiality and professionalism. Such regulations shall cover conflict of interest, confidentiality and transparent decision making. All individuals engaged under this Act must undergo mandatory training on the code of conduct and ethical guidelines upon appointment and periodically thereafter.

CHAPTER 8

REGULATORY AND LEGAL PROVISIONS

23. Indemnity.— No suit, prosecution, or other legal proceedings shall lie against the members of the Commission, the Chairperson or Members of the Authority, members of the Committee, employees, consultants, or advisers for any act or omission done in good faith in the exercise or performance of any function, power or duty conferred or imposed by or under this Act, except where it is proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the act or omission was done in bad faith or involved wilful misconduct, fraud or gross negligence.

24. Delegation of powers. — The Authority may, by notification in the official Gazette, delegate specific powers to its Chairperson, Members, or officers as required for the performance of its functions.

25. Power to make rules.— The Authority may, with the approval of the Federal Government and by notification in the official Gazette, make rules, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, for exercising its powers and carrying out its functions under this Act.

26. Power to make regulations.— The Authority may, by notification in the official Gazette, make regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act or the rules, for exercising its powers and carrying out of its functions under this Act.

27. Power of the Federal Government to issue policy directives.— The Federal Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, give policy directives to the Authority to align its actions with national policies, priorities and interests. Such directives shall not impede the Authority's

operational autonomy, and the Authority shall comply with them, ensuring consistency with the objectives and framework established under this Act.

28. Act to override other laws.— (1) The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law for the time being in force. In case of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Act shall prevail, subject to sub-sections (2) and (3).

(2) Where any law prescribes specific measures for protecting citizens' data rights and cybersecurity, such provisions shall have overriding effect and must be complied with in executing this Act.

(3) In cases where conflicts with existing laws are identified, the Authority shall establish a consultative process involving relevant stakeholders and concerned regulatory bodies to assess and resolve the conflict through consultation. Where conflict persists, the Commission may issue necessary recommendations or directives for resolution or propose legislative amendments to the Government.

29. Bar of jurisdiction.— Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force and except as provided under this Act, no decision or action taken under this Act or rules or regulations made thereunder shall be questioned by any agency or challenged in any court or tribunal, nor shall any injunction be granted against such decisions or actions.

30. Removal of difficulties. — If a procedural or operational difficulty arises in giving effect to any of the provisions of this Act, the Federal Government may, within six months of the commencement of this Act, make such order not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing such difficulty.

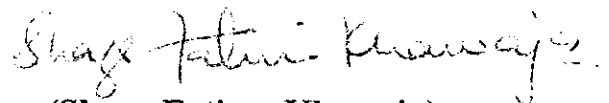
Statement of Objects and Reasons

The Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2024, aims to transform Pakistan into a digitally empowered nation by fostering a dynamic digital society, a robust digital economy, and efficient digital governance. Recognizing the potential of digital technologies to drive innovation, economic growth, and societal well-being, the Bill seeks to accelerate sustainable development, enhance public service delivery, and modernize governance for improved transparency and effectiveness.

2. The Bill establishes key governance bodies: the **National Digital Commission (NDC)**, **Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC)** and the **Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA)**. The NDC, chaired by the Prime Minister and comprising federal and provincial leadership, will set the strategic vision and policy framework for the country's digital transformation. The PDA will implement these policies by coordinating and harmonizing digital initiatives across all levels of government and the SOC monitors the PDA's performance and provides an independent review to the NDC ensuring alignment with the Masterplan.

3. A cornerstone of the Bill is the National Digital Masterplan, which provides a comprehensive strategy for aligning and optimizing digital initiatives, eliminating redundancies across federal, provincial, and local levels, and driving economic growth through enhanced public service delivery. The implementation plan under the Masterplan will detail specific projects, required resources, timelines, and risk management strategies to ensure its effective execution. The Bill further emphasizes effective data governance to ensure secure and responsible data management and prioritizes the development of digital public infrastructure and data exchange layer to foster innovation, enhance public services, and safeguard citizen privacy.

4. The enactment of this legislation reflects Pakistan's commitment to responsibly leveraging digital technologies for economic growth, modern governance, and digital inclusion, aligning the nation with global best practices in the digital age..



(Shaza Fatima Khawaja)

**Minister of State
Minister-in-charge**