



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

## **Prime Minister Imran Khan lays the foundation for Hunza's first IT Park**



**Gilgit, Pakistan, 30 April 2021** - Prime Minister Imran Khan today unveiled the plaque at a ceremony in Chinarbagh, Gilgit to lay the foundation of Hunza's first Information Technology Park located in Nasirabad, Hunza. Established jointly by Special Communications Organization of the Government of Pakistan and the Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan, the IT Park in Hunza will provide state-of-the-art infrastructure with un-interrupted

power supply, high-speed internet facility and a co-working space for small and growing businesses, start-ups, freelancers, and chamber of commerce.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, while highlighting the opportunities in Gilgit-Baltistan, said, "I am pleased to witness the recent remarkable developments in the communication & information technology sector, which is reflected in the development of mobile services such as the launch of 4G and broadband services, as well as digital solutions related to cloud-based data centers, and these are all indicators of very positive progress in the region."

The event was attended by Asad Umar, Federal Minister Planning and Development, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Major General Muhammad Shahid Siddeeq, DG Special Communications Organisation, Colonel Imran Mansoor, Sector Commander SCO Gilgit, Hafiz Sherali, President, Ismaili Council for Pakistan, Akhtar Iqbal, CEO Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan, Air Commodore Waqar Ahmed, Director Operations and External Affairs, Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan, Hammad Bin Abdul Khaliq, Joint Director Incubation, Punjab Information Technology Board and Osman Nasir, MD, Pakistan Software Export Board.

Major General Shahid Siddeeq, Director General of Pakistan's Special Communications Organisation informed the participants about multiple projects by the Organisation in the region which include the China Optical Fiber Link, Fiber-to-Home Service, Satellite Communications for Remote Areas, Cloud-based Data Centre, Incubation Centre and IT Parks. Talking about the foundation of the IT Park in Hunza, he mentioned that they aim to create a web of such IT Parks which "will provide the youth an opportunity to stand on their feet and bring revolution in the software industry."

The IT Park will strengthen cooperation between SCO, AKF and other Aga Khan Development Network agencies with the shared objectives of sustainable socio-economic development of Gilgit Baltistan through reliable internet and telecom infrastructure. It will enable the youth of the region to prepare for the digital-driven future of work opportunities in areas such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and other emerging areas. Business Process Outsourcing services and global software solutions from such IT Parks will boost local economic development in the areas.

Highlighting the significance of the IT Park, Akhtar Iqbal, CEO, AKF Pakistan, said, “the future of work is evolving fast, driven by exponential technological changes. Gilgit Baltistan has the potential to capitalise on the rapid changes by strengthening IT infrastructure which will act as the building block for digitally transforming the region’s economy.”

Strengthening the IT infrastructure will open access to increased knowledge for developing digital competencies and lead to global networking and collaboration for remote work, online marketplaces, and other national and global business opportunities.

**For more details, contact:**

Name: Air Cdre Waqar Ahmed

Designation: Director Operations and External Affairs

Organisation/Institutions: Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan

Ph #: 051 - 111 253 254

Email: waqar.ahmed@akdn.org

**NOTES**

*Special Communications Organization SCO*, a public sector organization operated by MoIT&T, is playing a major role in providing telecommunication services in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) and GB. SCO focuses on providing data services to millions with best coverage and quality. In addition to providing telecommunication services in Pakistan’s mountain region, SCO also practices social responsibility in carrying out projects for a better society and regional development. SCO focuses on providing data services to millions with best coverage and quality. In addition to providing telecommunication services in Pakistan’s mountain region, SCO also practices social responsibility in carrying out projects for a better society and regional development. SCO has keen interest to help create income earning opportunities for the youth of the area by providing them with high-speed internet connectivity, employable skills and IT infrastructure such as IT Parks in main population hubs of GB.

*Aga Khan Foundation (Pakistan)* AKF (Pak) is an agency of the AKDN, is a private, non-denominational, international development agency established in 1967 under SECP registration and special protocol signed with GOP. AKF (P) seeks to provide long-term solutions to problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ill health in the poorest and remote parts of the country, the needs of rural communities in mountainous and resource poor areas are given particular attention. The Foundation's activities often reinforce the work of other sister agencies within the AKDN. AKF (P) also collaborates with local, national and international partners in order to bring about sustainable improvements in people’s life.

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/prime-minister-imran-khan-lays-foundation-hunzas-first-it-park>