

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



“ For Pakistan, the opportunity extends beyond being a market for new energy vehicles. With greater localization, technology transfer, supplier development and investment in skills and infrastructure, Pakistan can build stronger industrial capabilities and become a meaningful participant in the regional EV value chain. ”



Mr. Faisal Sharif
Director-South Asia Region
GAC Group

ICMA: GAC is expanding its international footprint through greater localization and regional partnerships. What factors are most important in successfully building a sustainable business ecosystem in emerging markets such as Pakistan?

Faisal Sharif: Sustainable localization starts with the right ecosystem, built around strong local partnerships, customer focused execution, talent development, supply chain capability and long-term commitment. It requires businesses to understand local market needs, work closely with local partners and customers, and invest in developing local skills and capabilities. The objective is not simply to enter a market, but to build lasting local capacity, strengthen the value chain and create shared value. Over time, this approach helps businesses become more responsive to local needs while supporting economic

development and creating sustainable opportunities.

ICMA: With GAC's expertise in LFP, NMC, and next-generation battery technologies, what opportunities do you see for Pakistan to develop capabilities around battery technology, lifecycle management, and the wider EV ecosystem?

Faisal Sharif: GAC brings distinctive capabilities through its self-developed industrial chain and full stack independent R&D, covering batteries, electric drives and energy systems. Its proprietary Magazine Battery is designed to provide a high level of safety and has recorded more than 1.3 million installations and over 50 billion kilometers of safe travel. These capabilities give GAC experience across key areas of the electric mobility value chain, rather than focusing only on vehicle manufacturing.

For Pakistan, the opportunity therefore extends beyond increasing EV adoption. It includes developing local capabilities in battery technology, diagnostics, battery lifecycle management, recycling, charging infrastructure and energy integration. Local partnerships, technical training and knowledge sharing could help build the skills and supporting industries needed for a stronger EV market.

With the right policy and investment framework, these capabilities could gradually support local manufacturing, strengthen the EV supply chain and create new opportunities for technology, services and skilled employment. Over time, this could help Pakistan develop a broader EV ecosystem and establish a stronger industrial base that can serve both the domestic market and the wider region.

ICMA: LMC already operates a diversified manufacturing platform with international automotive brands. How can the integration of GAC's technology and global expertise further strengthen Pakistan's position within regional automotive value chains?

Faisal Sharif: The opportunity is to combine global technology, engineering expertise and quality standards with Pakistan's industrial capabilities, skilled talent and regional connectivity. This approach can help local companies move beyond basic assembly towards higher value activities such as component manufacturing, engineering, testing and technical services.

Over time, deeper localization can strengthen competitiveness by developing local suppliers, improving production capabilities and reducing reliance on imported components. It can also create opportunities for skills development, technology transfer and stronger links between manufacturers and local industries. With sustained investment and the right policy support, Pakistan can gradually build a more capable automotive supply chain and position itself more meaningfully within regional automotive value chains, serving both the domestic market and potential export markets.

ICMA: The proposed commercial battery-swapping infrastructure represents a shift beyond traditional vehicle sales towards a broader mobility ecosystem. How do you see such infrastructure shaping the future of mobility in Pakistan?

Faisal Sharif: Battery swapping can fundamentally reshape EV economics by reducing charging downtime and increasing vehicle utilization. Instead of waiting for a battery to charge, users can replace a depleted battery with a fully charged one in a short period, allowing vehicles to remain in use for longer. This can be particularly valuable for commercial and high usage vehicles where time spent charging directly affects productivity.

A consumer subscription model can further accelerate adoption by separating battery ownership from the vehicle and spreading the battery cost over time. This can materially lower the upfront cost of an EV and make electric mobility more accessible to a wider range of consumers. The subscription model can also provide users with greater flexibility in managing battery related costs and access to replacement batteries.

However, the model requires sufficient initial scale to achieve economic viability. A successful battery swapping network would need an adequate number of users, strategically located swapping stations, compatible battery standards and reliable supporting infrastructure. With the right critical volume, infrastructure and common standards, Pakistan could move towards practical and wider adoption of battery swapping, helping to accelerate both EV penetration and the development of a supporting battery swapping ecosystem.

ICMA: Looking ahead, what strategic shifts do you believe will shape the future of the automotive industry in South Asia, and how can companies and markets prepare for this transformation?

Faisal Sharif: The future of the South Asian automotive industry will be shaped not simply by vehicle sales, but by an integrated mobility ecosystem that combines electrification, range extension technologies, software defined vehicles, AI, connectivity, autonomous driving, intelligent manufacturing, energy integration, localisation and new mobility models. As the industry moves beyond traditional mechanical engineering, supply chains and production systems will also evolve, creating new opportunities for technology, infrastructure, talent and local capability.

For Pakistan, this transformation presents an opportunity to move beyond being a market for new energy vehicles and become a meaningful participant in the regional EV value chain. Greater localisation, technology transfer, supplier development and new ownership models can help build stronger industrial capabilities. Realising this opportunity will require long term commitment, the right ecosystem, investment in skills and infrastructure, and sufficient scale to convert technology adoption into sustainable industrial capability. Companies and markets that build these capabilities early will be better positioned to participate in the emerging regional mobility ecosystem.

The Editorial Board thanks Mr. Faisal Sharif, Director-South Asia Region, GAC Group for sparing his precious time to give an exclusive interview for Chartered Management Accountant Journal.