Beat: News

Zeeshan Ali Pakistan's First Son in Orbit

A New Chapter Written in the Stars

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USPA NEWS - Zeeshan Ali: Pakistan's First Son in Orbit
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By: For Every Pakistani Who Ever Looked Up at the Sky.

There are moments in a nation's life that divide history into "before" and "after." November 25, 2026, is one of those moments for Pakistan.

At 5:18 AM Pakistan time, when most of the country was still asleep, a Long March-2F rocket roared into the sky from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China. On board was not just a crew of three. On board was the dream of 240 million Pakistanis.

On board was *Muhammad Zeeshan Ali.
Pakistan's first astronaut, the first Pakistani ever in orbit, and the first foreign astronaut ever to visit China's Tiangong space station.

This was not a joyride. This was not symbolism. This was history.

" I'm Not Flying For Myself"

A day before the launch, Zeeshan Ali stood before the world's media and said a line that will be remembered for generations:

I'm not flying for myself.
I carry the name of Pakistan on my shoulder.

That one sentence tells you everything about the man. He is a 40-year-old pilot, a professional who earned his place not through connections, but through three rounds of ruthless screening and assessment, and then months of gruelling training in China.

He and his backup, Khurram Dawood, were selected from the best Pakistan had to offer. Ali was chosen to fly. Dawood stayed on the ground to support him. Both are heroes. But on November 25, it was Ali who carried the flag.

He did not just learn how to survive in space. He spent seven months in Beijing, learning Chinese language, Chinese songs, and even reading Chinese poetry, to be able to live and work as a true crewmate, not a guest.

That is dedication. That is the Pakistani spirit at its best.

A Real Mission, With Real Science.

Zeeshan Ali is flying as a
Payload Specialist* alongside Chinese Commander

Tang Hongbo, and Flight Engineer Wu Yi.

His job is not to sit and wave. He will spend 5 to 10 days on Tiangong, installing experimental samples, operating research equipment, and carrying out scheduled experiments.

And here is the part that critics miss: This science is "Pakistani science".

Four Pakistani biotechnology experiments, selected from more than 300 proposals submitted by universities across Pakistan to SUPARCO, are going up with him. The research focuses on areas that matter to every ordinary Pakistani.
food security and climate change.

When Zeeshan Ali conducts those experiments in microgravity, he is not doing it for China. He is doing it for the Pakistani farmer whose crop fails due to changing weather, for the Pakistani student who dreams of a lab, for the Pakistani child who will one day eat food grown from seeds tested in space.

This is how nations build a scientific future one experiment at a time.
Docking: 3.5 Hours That Changed Everything.
The launch was perfect. Just three and a half hours later, Shenzhou-24 docked with Tiangong at 11:56 AM Beijing time (8:56 AM Pakistan time).

In that moment, Pakistan officially became a spacefaring nation in the human sense. We were no longer a country that only watches launches on TV. We were a country whose son was now floating above the Earth, looking down at the same land we all live on.

This mission is the culmination of the Pakistan-China agreement signed in February 2025 to select and train Pakistani astronauts. It is proof that the Pak-China friendship is not just about roads, ports, and trade.
it is about the future itself.

China did not have to do this. No country had ever sent a foreign astronaut to Tiangong before. China chose Pakistan to be the first. That is trust. That is brotherhood.

Why This Matters More Than Any Critic Will Admit.

Some people will ask, "What did we get from this?

Here is the answer,

1. For Our Children:* Tonight, millions of Pakistani children will look at the sky and think, "If Zeeshan Ali can go there, why can't I?" No textbook, no motivational speech can do what one real hero in orbit can do. He has made science cool, made ambition possible, made Pakistan proud.

2. For Our Science:* SUPARCO, our universities, our young researchers now have a direct link to a working space station. The data from those four experiments will come back to Pakistan. The training, the knowledge, the protocols.
all of it stays with us.

3. For Our Standing in the World:
The whole world watched Reuters, BBC, CNN, and every major outlet carry the headline: "Pakistani astronaut in space." For one day, Pakistan was not in the news for problems. Pakistan was in the news for achievement. That is soft power that money cannot buy.

4. For Our Future:* This is not the end. This is the beginning. The agreement with China opens the door for more Pakistani astronauts, more joint missions, and one day, a Pakistani role in lunar exploration. China is planning a crewed mission to the Moon and eventually Mars. Because Zeeshan Ali went first, Pakistan will be in that conversation.

A Hero We Must Honour.

Zeeshan Ali did not go to space to become famous. He went to prove that a Pakistani pilot, trained in Pakistan, educated in Pakistan, and believing in Pakistan, can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the best astronauts in the world and perform.

When he returns to Earth aboard Shenzhou-23 after about a week, he will not return as just a pilot. He will return as a national asset, a

teacher, an inspiration, and a living proof that Pakistan can do anything it sets its mind to.

Today, the green flag flies in Tiangong. Today, the crescent is in orbit.
Salute to you, Zeeshan Ali. You carried Pakistan on your shoulder — and you carried it to the stars.*

Pakistan Zindabad.
Pak-China Dosti Zindabad.

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