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Lahore to Introduce Pakistan's First Trackless Metro System

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On July 21, 2025, Lahore welcomed the trial phase of Pakistan's first trackless, solar-powered metro, the Super Autonomous Rail Rapid Transit (SRT) system, marking a bold step toward modernizing urban transport. This innovative “subway on wheels” operates without rails, using Virtual Track Technology, and promises sustainable mobility. This article

explores the system's features, its potential impact, and Pakistan's vision for greener cities.

The SRT system, unveiled near Lahore Airport, relies on advanced sensors, GPS, and digital mapping to navigate roads, eliminating the need for costly rail infrastructure. Unlike traditional metros, this battery-powered, electric vehicle offers flexibility and lower construction costs, making it ideal for congested cities like Lahore. "This is a test for the future of public transport in Punjab," a Punjab Transport Department official stated, as reported by *Bloom Pakistan*. The pilot project, attended by Pakistani and Chinese officials, reflects strong bilateral ties, with the technology originating in Jiangsu, China, where it won the Zhan Tianyou Award in 2021.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's five-year transport plan aims to deploy the Automated Rapid Transit (ART) system, akin to SRT, in 30 cities, starting with Lahore, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala. Each vehicle, carrying up to 300 passengers, operates in dedicated lanes with smart stations featuring solar-powered charging and ticketless fare systems. "This isn't just infrastructure; it's a leap toward equitable, green mobility," Maryam said, per *Gulf News*. The system could replace up to 100 cars per vehicle, slashing pollution and traffic in Lahore, a city choking on smog and congestion.

While the trial has sparked excitement, questions remain about scalability and funding. The SRT's success in China, Malaysia, and the UAE suggests promise, but Pakistan's economic constraints demand careful execution. If successful, operations could begin by 2026, expanding to Karachi and Islamabad. This initiative signals Pakistan's commitment to

innovation, offering a model for sustainable urban growth despite financial challenges.