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## Pakistan Railways Launches Major Modernization Push

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Federal Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi has unveiled an ambitious transformation plan for Pakistan Railways, pledging to upgrade Faisalabad Station to international standards within 45 days. The sweeping reforms include digitalization initiatives, infrastructure overhauls, and strategic outsourcing of services across the national rail network. With Rs300 billion allocated for critical projects including the

Lahore-Rawalpindi double track and new Diesel Multiple Unit trains, the plan aims to revolutionize Pakistan's transportation backbone while generating new revenue streams.

Key improvements already underway include complete ticketing automation, real-time train tracking systems, and ATM installations at major stations. A partnership with the Punjab government will deliver free WiFi to 40 stations nationwide, beginning with Lahore and expanding to Faisalabad, Karachi, and Hyderabad. Minister Abbasi emphasized operational reforms, including outsourcing passenger/freight services and converting former government saloons into affordable public rental spaces. Hygiene upgrades feature prominently, with professional waste management contracts secured for stations in Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan and other cities.

The modernization drive leverages substantial provincial investments, including Punjab's Rs50 billion commitment to upgrade eight key routes. The flagship Lahore-Rawalpindi corridor project promises to slash travel times by 2.5 hours through new tracks and advanced signaling systems. Additional initiatives include a Rs2.35 billion linear park along the Shahdara-Raiwind route and station refurbishments in Karachi, Taxila, and Balochistan's Kuchlak region. These infrastructure upgrades complement new DMU trains capable of transporting 650 passengers on busy intercity routes.

This comprehensive rail overhaul represents Pakistan's most significant transportation reform in decades, blending infrastructure development with operational efficiency gains. By September, outsourcing contracts are expected to inject private sector expertise while boosting service quality and revenue. As the first visible improvements take shape in

Faisalabad, the program's success will be measured by its ability to deliver lasting transformation rather than temporary facelifts. If fully implemented, these reforms could position Pakistan Railways as a modern, sustainable transport solution for the 21st century – reconnecting cities, boosting commerce, and restoring public confidence in rail travel. The coming months will prove decisive in determining whether these ambitious plans translate into tangible benefits for passengers and the national economy.

