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Uzbekistan Emerges as Pakistan's Top Trade Ally

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In a significant development for regional commerce, Uzbekistan has officially become Pakistan's largest trading partner in Central Asia, with bilateral trade exceeding \$400 million in 2024. Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev announced this milestone during a media briefing at the Uzbek Embassy in Islamabad, highlighting the growing economic partnership between the two nations. The achievement reflects years of strategic

cooperation, with 130 joint ventures now operating in Uzbekistan through Pakistani investments. Both countries have set an ambitious target to double trade volumes to \$2 billion by addressing remaining barriers and enhancing connectivity.

The strengthening economic ties demonstrate how two developing nations can create mutually beneficial partnerships outside traditional Western alliances. Ambassador Tukhtaev emphasized the need to improve transport infrastructure, streamline customs procedures, and foster business community engagement to achieve the \$2 billion trade target. This cooperation comes as both nations seek to diversify their economic partnerships and reduce reliance on single markets. The growing trade relationship has been facilitated by recent improvements in regional connectivity, including upgraded road networks and simplified visa regimes between the countries.

Economic analysts note the partnership leverages complementary strengths – Uzbekistan's strategic Central Asian location and natural resources paired with Pakistan's manufacturing capabilities and large consumer market. Key trade sectors include textiles, agricultural products, and industrial machinery, with growing interest in energy cooperation. The 130 existing joint ventures span various industries, demonstrating the breadth of economic engagement. This developing corridor presents attractive opportunities for investors seeking access to both Central and South Asian markets through a single partnership.

As global supply chains continue evolving, the Pakistan-Uzbekistan trade relationship offers a model for South-South cooperation. The success to date proves that developing nations can build substantial economic ties without relying on traditional Western partners. With both governments

committed to removing remaining trade barriers, the \$2 billion target appears achievable. This partnership not only benefits both economies but could reshape regional trade dynamics, creating new opportunities across Central and South Asia. The coming years will likely see this relationship deepen further, potentially making Uzbekistan a gateway for Pakistani goods into the broader Eurasian market.

The rapid growth in bilateral commerce demonstrates what can be accomplished when nations focus on practical economic cooperation rather than political posturing. As Ambassador Tukhtaev noted, the foundation of trust and mutual benefit has created a partnership that delivers concrete results for both populations. With continued focus on improving logistics and reducing bureaucratic hurdles, this trade relationship appears poised for sustained growth. The success story offers valuable lessons for other developing nations seeking to expand their economic horizons in today's changing global landscape.

