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Pakistan Railways Restores Key Routes

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Pakistan Railways has launched a major plan to revive several non-functional railway routes across the country, aiming to strengthen connectivity and boost commercial activity in multiple regions.

The Sibi-Harnai section, closed since 2006, has already been restored under the initiative. The Ministry of Railways has conducted surveys to evaluate the practicality and potential success of reviving seven additional routes. These proposed sections include Mari Indus

Lakki Marwat Bannu, Mandra Bhaun, Faisalabad Jaranwala, Fort Abbas Katal Amara, Tando Adam Tharu Shah, Mirpur Khas Nawabshah, and Bostan Zhob.

Beyond restoration, new railway links are being planned. One such project involves connecting the Thar coal mines to Chhor railway station to support energy and industrial transportation needs.

A Ministry official said that route performance, market demand, and operational feasibility are continuously monitored. “Any decisions regarding future freight or passenger expansions will be made strategically, in line with evolving commercial needs and national logistics objectives,” the official added.

In parallel, the Ministry plans to outsource 200 freight wagons to the private sector to meet growing industrial and energy sector demands. Officials said the outsourcing process is nearing completion.

Pakistan Railways has maintained regular freight operations nationwide, including cargo express services between Karachi and Multan/Faisalabad and Lahore, Kundian freight operations between Quetta and Taftan, container services for Prem Nagar and Qila Sattar Shah, oil transportation between Multan and Rawalpindi, and dedicated cargo services supporting commercial and industrial supply chains.

Feasibility studies for international rail connectivity are also underway. The Kohat–Thal–Kharlachi route with Afghanistan has completed its feasibility study, and land acquisition is in progress. Rail link projects from Gwadar to Nok Kundi and from Gwadar to Mastung via Besima, as well as from Besima to Jacobabad via Khuzdar, are nearing completion with land acquisitions underway.

The Ministry describes this phase as the most transformative period in Pakistan Railways’ history. Its reform agenda focuses on three pillars: maximizing public-private partnerships, expanding outsourcing of services, and ensuring full transparency.

Officials emphasize that these initiatives aim to enhance the efficiency, reliability, and commercial viability of Pakistan Railways, supporting the country’s economic growth and regional connectivity.