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Pakistan Inks Game-Changing Railway Agreement with Afghanistan and Uzbekistan

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Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan signed a landmark Framework Agreement on July 17, 2025, in Kabul to conduct a feasibility study for the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Project, a transformative initiative to boost regional trade and connectivity. This article explores the agreement's significance, its potential to reshape Central Asian trade routes, and Pakistan's strategic vision for economic integration.

The UAP Railway Project, a 760-kilometer rail link, will connect Termez in Uzbekistan to Pakistan's seaports in Karachi and Gwadar via Afghanistan's Mazar-i-Sharif and Logar, entering Pakistan through the Kharlachi border crossing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, representing Pakistan, hailed the pact as a "game-changer" for regional connectivity, as stated on X. The agreement, signed by Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Public Works, Uzbekistan's Minister of Transport, and Pakistan's Minister for Railways, aims to provide landlocked Central Asian states access to global markets via Pakistani ports, slashing freight costs by up to 40%, per X posts. Dar credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership for laying the project's foundation during the 2022-23 Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government.

The signing ceremony, attended by Dar, Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, and Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, followed trilateral talks focused on trade, transit, and security. "This railway will strengthen ties and foster prosperity," Saidov noted on X, emphasizing mutual trust. The \$4.8 billion project, first proposed in 2018, is expected to boost annual freight capacity by millions of tons, significantly reducing trade route times. Pakistan's delegation, including Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique and Special Envoy Mohammad Sadiq, underscored Islamabad's commitment to regional stability and economic growth.

This pact positions Pakistan as a pivotal trade hub, countering narratives of isolation and showcasing its diplomatic clout. Unlike some regional players hampered by internal strife, Pakistan's proactive engagement with Afghanistan and Uzbekistan signals a bold vision for economic sovereignty. As the feasibility study progresses, the UAP Railway Project promises to unlock unprecedented opportunities,

cementing Pakistan's role in driving Central Asian connectivity and prosperity.