

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

*JULY TO DECEMBER 2020*

## KCR / RAILWAY



## Urban Resource Centre

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A-2, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Westland Trade Centre, Block 7&8, C-5, Shaheed-e-Millat Road, Karachi.  
Tel: 021-4559317, Fax: 021-4387692, Email: [urc@cyber.net.pk](mailto:urc@cyber.net.pk), Website: [www.urckarachi.org](http://www.urckarachi.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/URCKHI](https://www.facebook.com/URCKHI) Twitter: <https://twitter.com/urckhi>

## State of railways

Like most public-sector organisations, the Pakistan Railways too is running into losses. Yesterday, during the hearing of a petition, Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Gulzar Ahmed severely castigated the Railways Secretary for the unsatisfactory performance of his department. Replying to a question from the Chief Justice of Pakistan about the number of railway employees, the secretary informed that 76,000 people worked for the organisation, upon which the top judge expressed surprise that with such a huge manpower the department's performance was disappointing.

The Chief Justice observed that the railways seems to have employees far in excess of its requirements, and that most of the railway systems and factories were lying idle, so 10,000 employees would be sufficient for efficient functioning of the department. The honourable judge implied to say that overstaffing is one of the causes contributing to the railways' swelling losses. He asked the secretary to go out in the field and see things for himself and simply not do only paperwork inside his office. The top judge also took railway officials to task for the increasing number of accidents. During the hearing it was revealed that there was no computerised record of railway employees. This is surprising and shows the state of neglect prevailing in the Pakistan Railways.

A day earlier during the hearing of a petition seeking regularisation of railway employees, the counsel for the petitioner told the Supreme Court that employees seeking permanent status had been working as temporary employees for the department for more than 20 years. He said such employees were more like daily-wage workers working against permanent posts, and vacancies or these posts were never advertised. The Chief Justice expressed astonishment that there was no clue as to what projects workers were hired for and who appointed them. Justice Ijazul Ahsan, another judge on the bench, expressed displeasure that inexperienced hands were being hired for jobs that need expertise.

The government has lately been taking steps to put the railways back on the rails. As part of the strategy, Prime Minister Imran Khan has instructed the Pakistan Railways to expedite the process of handing over the management of 15 trains to the private sector.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 11/07/2020)

## 14km KCR track to be completed within two months

In compliance with the Supreme Court orders, the city administration is making all-out efforts to launch the 44-kilometre Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and expedite progress of the work being carried out for the launch of the KCR with the coordination of Pakistan Railways, all other stakeholders and the departments concerned.

Official sources said on Sunday that a meeting was held in this regard under the chairmanship of Commissioner of Karachi Iftikhar Shallwani at his office which reviewed the progress on the project and took various decisions to get the hurdles in the way of launch of the circular railway removed.

They said it was also decided in the meeting that work on laying a 14-kilometre track from Karachi City to Orangi Town would be completed with the railway stations located along the route within two months so that the trial for running the train could be undertaken before the launch of the KCR project.

Divisional superintendent of Pakistan Railways Arshad Salam Khattak briefed the commissioner on the progress, explaining the steps being taken for the revival of the project.

The meeting decided that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) would carry out the work of improvement of sewerage infrastructure on a priority basis, which is one of the hurdles in the way of completion of the project.

Managing director of the KWSB Asadullah Khan assured the meeting that the water board would comply with the decisions of the meeting to under take the work of improving the infrastructure.

An official of the provincial Planning and Development Department briefed the meeting on the work of fencing to be undertaken along both sides of the route, explaining that the planning and tendering process of the work had been completed and "hopefully" the fencing work would be started next week.

The meeting was attended among others by DIG for Security Maqsood Ahmed, Chief Engineer of Pakistan Railways Ameer Mohammad Daudpota, additional deputy commissioners of different districts, officials of the Sindh Buildings Control Authority and the Transport Department.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 13/07/2020)

## City administration to expedite KCR revival

Following the Supreme Court's order regarding the restoration of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), the city administration is looking to expedite the work in coordination with Pakistan Railways (PR) and other relevant departments.

Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shallwani chaired a meeting on Sunday to review the progress of the project and resolve the challenges it was facing.

It was decided in the meeting to complete the work of laying railway tracks from Karachi City Station to Orangi Town within two months, through all the railway stations located along the 14-kilometre route. This is to be done so a trial run for the train service can be carried out before it is launched.

Karachi divisional superintendent (DS) Arshad Salam Khattak briefed the commissioner about the project's progress and the steps being taken for the KCR's restoration.

He pointed out that the sewerage infrastructure needed to be replaced from Urdu Bazar to Depot Hill Station. The meeting decided that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) would take up this task, which according to the meeting's participants, was one of the hurdles for the railway's restoration, on a priority basis.

KWSB head Asadullah Khan assured the participants of the meeting that the department would comply with the decision and improve the infrastructure.

Meanwhile, a Sindh Planning and Development Department official apprised the participants of the meeting that the installation of fences on both sides of the railway track along the route would start by next week since the planning and tendering process had been completed.

The meeting was also attended by Security DIG Maqsood Ahmad, PR chief engineer Ameer Mohammad Daudpota, additional deputy commissioners of different districts, officials of the Sindh Building Control Authority and Sindh Transport and Mass Transit Department.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 05, 13/07/2020)

### **Green signal for ML-1**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) has approved the \$6.8 billion Mainline-1 railway project, which allows the government to move ahead with its fundraising. The project, which is part of CPEC, is expected to be about 90 per cent foreign-financed through loans from China. Engineering, procurement, and construction will go to Chinese contractors, for which a request for exemption from international competitive bidding will be sent to the Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet. The rail project is notable as it is the only strategic project being finalised as part of the initial \$46 billion in CPEC deals.

Despite the contracts essentially being no-bid, Pakistan expects fair prices, because the estimates have all been vetted by third parties. There was apparently some haggling involved because of the separate negotiations with the IMF, which has its own concerns about debt sustainability. It appears Pakistan has addressed these concerns by drawing up an elaborate phased construction plan. In the first of three phases, Pakistan will commit to around \$2.4 billion worth of construction work to stay compliant with an IMF commitment that created a spending limit of \$2.5 billion during the same period. The second phase will start a year after phase one and will cost \$2.7 billion as the IMF spending ceiling will not apply. The final phase will begin two years after "package one" and will cost \$1.7 billion.

Even though the Ecne meeting lasted for just 30 minutes, at least one spanner was thrown in the works, namely a proposal by Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid to move the \$856 million Lalamusa-Rawalpindi section from phase three to phase one. Rashid just happens to be an MNA from Rawalpindi. Fortunately, reports suggest Planning Minister Asad Umar shot down the proposal, noting that the packages had been finalised in consultation with all stakeholders, including Rashid's ministry. While some minor hurdles still remain, we hope that work on the cross-country rail project can begin soon. Higher speed trains will be a boon to trade and public transport, and an upgrade that Pakistan's archaic rail system has needed for decades.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 08/08/2020)

### **PR chief wants installation of underpasses, bridges**

The Pakistan Railways chairman Habib-ur-Rehman Gillani visited the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) tracks on Sunday. He also held a meeting regarding the revival of the KCR.

The meeting was attended by PR divisional superintendent (DS), Karachi, Arshad Salam Khattak, KCR project director Ameer Mohammad Daudpota, deputy DS Farid Ahmad and relevant engineers working in the KCR project.

The railways chairman visited various stations and level crossings of the KCR project from City to Drigh Road while travelling through Baldia, Shah Latif, SITE, Orangi, Nazimabad, Gillani and Urdu College stations. He also held a trolley inspection of the loop. The chairman also examined the area of Green Line bus project that crosses the KCR tracks in Nazimabad and stressed the need for expediting communication with the relevant authorities so that the proposed underpasses or overhead bridges could be built timely.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 14, 10/08/2020)

### **Make KCR operational this year, says SC**

The Supreme Court (SC) directed officials on Monday to ensure that the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) became operational this year.

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Faisal Arab and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, held a hearing on the intra-city rail service's restoration at the SC Karachi registry.

The CJP expressed displeasure when the railways secretary stated the KCR track was nearly cleared. "The deadline given [for the KCR restoration] has expired. Why has it not been restored?" he asked, at which the railways secretary responded that there were some obstructions due to the Green Line bus rapid transit project.

When the court turned to the advocate general to ask if the Sindh government had done anything in this regard, the latter explained that underpasses and overhead bridges were being built to deal with this, while the transport secretary added Rs5 billion had been allocated for the KCR in the provincial budget of which Rs3 billion had been released.

Irrked, the CJP remarked that all tasks given to the government dragged on indefinitely, adding that the work should be assigned to capable people.

The court ordered the completion of underpasses, flyovers, fencing and other work related to the KCR within the stipulated time.

#### **Kidney Hill Park encroachment**

The court also directed Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shallwani to raze the building of a private school as well as houses built on Kidney Hill Park land.

Shallwani informed the court that they had issued several notices to Faran Society, but without response.

When the court asked about shops or markets on park premises, the municipal commissioner said there were no shops, but Foundation Public School had a building there since 1996 and had obtained a stay order from the Sindh High Court.

When the counsel claimed it was difficult to run schools on commercial plots, Justice Ahsan asked if he was aware of the revenue generated by schools, adding that they earned billions of rupees.

A report submitted in court stated that 56 acres were reserved for the park, while four residential plots of 500 yards each, allotted by PECHS, were not included in the master plan.

CJP Ahmed remarked that PECHS had allotted land for illegal occupation, and asked whether the houses at the site were part of the master plan. Shallwani replied they were not, adding that the residents had been given evacuation notices.

The court told Shallwani to raze the houses and school building, and submit a report after vacating the land. It added that the allottees could contact the relevant authorities for a refund.

#### **Restoring greenery**

The Supreme Court (SC) directed on Monday the authorities to restore the green-belt along Sharae Quaideen while hearing a case pertaining to the removal of encroachments on the thoroughfare.

While Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shallwani informed the court the encroachments had been removed and the green-belt restored, the petitioner's counsel claimed otherwise.

Commenting on the road's transformation, CJP Ahmed observed that the houses alongside it had been replaced by high-rise buildings and asked who had allowed their construction.

Shallwani responded that that Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and Karachi Development Authority had allotted the land to various builders.

The court directed the authorities to remap Lines Area by constructing high-rise apartment buildings and settling citizens there, while also ordering them to restore the Sharae Quaideen green-belt within a month.

#### **Sea Breeze Plaza**

Moreover, the bench directed the allottees of Sea Breeze Plaza to submit Rs50 million for the retrofitting of the building after National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) officials told the court that this task would require around Rs500 million.

The court added that NESPAK would be responsible for the building, which has been standing incomplete for decades, and directed the authorities to submit a detailed report regarding the retrofitting.

#### **Gymkhana renovation**

In another hearing, the CJP ordered the Karachi Gymkhana management to stop construction and renovation on its premises and sought a report from Shallwani, after the advocate-general stated that illegal construction was being carried out there in violation of court orders and laws pertaining to heritage sites.

Furthermore, the same bench directed authorities to remove illegal encroachments from Civil Aviation Authority land in Clifton and also construct a park on CAA land near the airport, further seeking a report from the CAA on this.

Separately, the court granted a three-month extension for the demolition of the Royal Park Residency building. The allottees' counsel moved the court to direct the authorities to issue refunds as well as profit, at which the bench issued notices to the relevant authorities.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 05, 11/08/2020)

### **Railways to call ML-I tenders in 15 days**

International tenders for the Main Line-1 (ML-1) are likely to be invited within next 15 days, paving way for initiating civil work on Pakistan Railways' mega project by January next year.

The tenders will however be limited to seeking interest of Chinese companies since the project will be funded and executed under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), says a senior PR official.

"We are all set to float international tenders within next 15 days for the award of EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contract for the execution of ML-1," the official told Dawn on Wednesday.

The construction of \$6.8 billion ML-I project, which was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) in its meeting in first week of this month, is the first mega project of its kind in the history of railways. Under a proposal, the federal government plans to contribute 10 per cent of the total cost of the project as its equity while 90 per cent cost will be met by China under the CPEC.

"Since the PR is responsible for providing right of way of the project, it has almost completed acquisition of the land required between Lalamusa – Rawalpindi section. This has been done for changing of the route (realignment) that will reduce 20km of travel," the official added.

The project consists of three packages. Under package-1, the existing tracks between Lala Musa and Lahore, Lahore and Multan and Nawab Shah and Rohri would be upgraded/replaced. The package-2 consists of upgrade of the track between Lala Musa and Rawalpindi, Noshehra and Peshawar and Hyderabad and Karachi sections. The package-3 includes upgrade of the remaining portions of the main line, including Multan/Khanewal to Sukkur. According to a document, the project's core objectives include reduction of logistics cost, efficiency gain for industry and trade, increase in passengers and freight share from four to 20 per cent by 2025 which will ultimately lead to reducing cost of operation and maintenance of roads.

Under a broader scope of work, the project would have upgrade of ML-1 from Karachi to Peshawar and Taxila to Havelian (1,872km), laying of new track allowing 160km/per hour speed, rehabilitation and construction of bridges, provision of modern signaling and telecom systems, replacing level crossings with underpasses/flyovers, fencing of track, establishment of dry port near Havelian and upgrade of Walton Training Academy (Lahore).

The project will create 24,000 direct and 150,000 indirect jobs for local labour/technical experts.

(By Khalid Hasnain Dawn, 02, 20/08/2020)

### **SC wants railways revamp plan in four weeks**

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Planning Commission to complete in next four weeks plans to revamp and restructure the dwindling infrastructure of Pakistan Railways (PR).

A three-judge Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed asked the Planning Commission to place a complete report before the court regarding the initiatives it intends to take for the restructuring of the railways.

The Supreme Court had taken up a suo motu case relating to colossal losses incurred by the PR.

The fast deteriorating state of affairs in the railways caught the attention of the apex court and for the last many hearings the court had repeatedly been asking for bringing improvements to the railways — a preferred means of communication of the common man.

On June 12 also, the Supreme Court had highlighted the need for complete restructuring of the PR, regretting that the railways could not function properly with huge surplus employees who were not only incompetent, but also not sincere towards their institution.

During one such hearing, the CJP had also referred to the repeated occurrence of accidents in which not only a number of innocent lives were lost, but the PR also had to suffer huge financial losses.

The CJP had also regretted earlier that the railways was continuously running into losses but its incompetent employees would never let the department go into profit and that everybody knows about the state of affairs in the railways since it was not a secret to anybody.

On Thursday the Supreme Court also inquired about the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project and asked the Planning Commission to overcome all hiccups and roadblocks in bringing the plan back on the track.

The court also ordered the district administration to conduct a thorough survey to complete the feasibility of developing bridges and underpasses in the way of the circular railway.

During the hearing, the CJP regretted about the dilapidated condition of the railway bridge between Karachi and Hyderabad and feared that it might crumble any time.

The CJP recalled the bridge developed during the colonial era at Kotri was still in a good condition and functioning properly whereas all bridges constructed after Ayub Khan's period was not up to the standard and thus faulty.

There is not a single bridge on the Indus River on which the nation could take a pride, according to the CJP, saying one constructed during the Ayub Khan tenure is the single bridge which can still be called beautiful.

Referring to the Main Railway Line — One (ML-1), the Supreme Court also directed that quality bridges and railroad should be constructed for this project. At this Secretary/Chairman, Ministry of Railways Habib-ur-Rehman Gillani assured the court that the state of the art bridges would be constructed during the up-gradation of Railways through ML-1, under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), adding the plan would be completed in the next three years.

A part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, ML-1 project, was launched to rehabilitate and improve the existing 1,860km ML-1 railway connecting Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar.

Recently the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) had approved the up-gradation of existing ML-1.

The project was approved at the rationalised cost of \$6.8 billion on a cost-sharing basis between the governments of China and Pakistan.

(By Nasir Iqbal Dawn, 01, 21/08/2020)

### Decrepit railway

THE Supreme Court has given the government four weeks to come up with a roadmap to revamp the country's battered railway infrastructure. During the hearing of a suo motu case related to the colossal losses suffered by the railway, a three-judge bench ordered the Planning Commission to submit a report before the court on initiatives it plans to implement for restructuring the railway. The court has of late repeatedly asked the authorities concerned to improve the railway, while referring to the increasing incidence of train accidents as a result of the crumbling infrastructure and poor enforcement of safety protocols. In an ideal situation, few, if any, would approve of suo motu judicial intervention in the public service sphere that is the executive's responsibility. That has not been the sentiment in this case.

Once a dominant means for large-scale cargo movement and the preferred mode of transportation, rail travel has become extremely risky owing to years of lack of investment, corruption, mismanagement, political and bureaucratic interference, and what not. Labour unions backed by politico-religious parties must also share the responsibility for the downfall of Pakistan Railways. Thousands of railway employees don't show up for work at all. It would not be unfair to point out here that PR has become near impossible to manage. On top of that, the authorities seem hardly bothered about public concerns over passenger safety. Recently, the government was reported to have approved a plan to restructure the railway by setting up a holding company, and creating separate entities for handling the functions of freight, passenger traffic and infrastructure development to turn it into a profitable enterprise.

Since its details remain unclear at the moment, it is difficult to comment on the effectiveness of the proposal. But one thing is becoming increasingly clear. No plan can succeed without trimming the size of the organisation and involving private businesses in its management and operations. Moreover, the government will need billions of dollars to improve the infrastructure, which is also not possible without private capital. The ML-1 project being launched under the CPEC initiative is not enough. More important, the railway will have to get out of passenger operations and cargo business. Private companies should be invited to participate and compete with one another in running passenger trains and cargo services. In exchange, they will have to pay the railway for the use of infrastructure and share a part of their revenue profits.

(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 22/08/2020)

### Rs10.5b allotted for KCR rehabilitation in ML-1 style

The Centre has earmarked Rs10.5 billion for the rehabilitation of the first and second phases of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) such that it can be built in the style of the Mainline-1 (ML-1) railway project, said project director Ameer Muhammad Daudpota on Tuesday.

The ML-1 project, worth \$6.8 billion, includes the dualisation and upgrading of the 1,872-kilometre railway track from Peshawar to Karachi and is part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It was approved earlier this month.

After the rehabilitation, in its third phase, KCR would be given the status of a rapid mass transit system under public-private partnership, stated Daudpota. In the first phase, the railway track from City Station to Orangi is to be restored within the stipulated time as directed by the Supreme Court, he added.

According to the project director, the track from City Station to SITE area has been restored while the track from SITE to Orangi is yet to be completed. The latter too will be restored soon, he claimed.

He further said that there had been no major obstacles in the rehabilitation process of KCR. Underpasses and flyovers, which were the responsibility of the Sindh government, would be constructed in the second phase of the project, he added.

Daudpota opined that the revival of KCR would provide citizens with improved travel facilities, particularly those who work in the SITE area. The project was a priority of the Pakistan Railways, he insisted, adding that the federal and provincial governments were on the same page with regards to KCR's revival.

Earlier this month, annoyed at the delay of KCR beyond the project's deadline, the Supreme Court directed officials to ensure the intra-city rail service was operational by the end of the year. During the hearing, the railways secretary had informed the apex court that obstructions were caused due to the Green Line bus rapid transit project. APP  
(By APP The Express Tribune, 05, 26/08/2020)

### ML-1

THE government is going ahead with ML-1 following the same old route. We will have to develop overhead and underpasses at hundreds of level crossings in addition to sustaining the increase in rail traffic during ML-1 construction.

How about laying a new straight line following our domestic air route? It will reduce the overall length of the line and avoid touching smaller railway stations and unnecessary stops. Starting from Karachi it should go to Nawabshah, Rahim Yar Khan, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar.

Laying a line in new areas will have less construction challenges. Besides, it will be great from the defence point of view.

S. Iqbal

Karachi

(From the Newspaper's Dawn 07, 28/08/2020)

### FWO to build 10 underpasses, bridges on KCR route

The Sindh government on Thursday announced partnership with the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) to revive the Karachi Circular Railway and tasked the military engineering organisation with building 10 underpasses and flyovers on the route of the local train service, a senior official said.

The announcement came at a meeting held to review the progress on development work of the KCR project in the wake of Supreme Court's orders.

The participants in the meeting chaired by Sindh Transport Minister Awais Qadir Shah decided to expedite the pace of construction of the structures which were required to be rebuilt after the old ones turned obsolete or had been declared dangerous.

"The meeting decided to build some 10 underpasses and flyovers which were marked in different areas on the route of the KCR through the FWO," said a statement issued after the meeting.

"The meeting also set aside five billion rupees for those structures and reviewed progress of the project under the directives of the Supreme Court. The meeting was attended by senior officials of the Sindh transport ministry and the FWO."

The Supreme Court last month had directed the provincial authorities to expedite work on underpasses, overhead bridges and fencing at the level crossings to ensure that the operation of the KCR was not obstructed because of road traffic.

In February, the court had directed the Pakistan Railways to revive and operate the KCR within six months and asked the provincial government to build necessary infrastructure like underpasses and overhead bridges at the level crossings.

During last month's hearing, the railways secretary had informed the court that the KCR track had "almost" been cleared of encroachments.

At this, the chief justice had regretted that the time granted by the court was over, but the KCR had not yet been revived.

"The KCR was commissioned in 1964, originally to help employees of the Pakistan Railways travel between their jobs — at and around the city and cantonment railway stations — and their residences in Karachi's eastern neighbourhoods," said a Sindh transport ministry official.

"The service became a full circle of 44km in 1970 and connected Karachi's four main work areas: the port, the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE), the city's central commercial areas such as Saddar and the Landhi Industrial Area. The KCR remained the public transport of choice for the people of Karachi till 1984 when the number of its trains was reduced."

Reasons for the move included lack of maintenance and repair, a yawning gap between rising expenditure due to higher fuel and operational costs and decreasing revenue due to subsidised tickets and the government's inability to spend money on improvement of tracks and stations, he added.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 04/09/2020)

### FWO to construct KCR underpasses

The Frontier Workers Organisation (FWO) has become a party in the Karachi Circular Railway and will construct underpasses and flyovers for the project.

Sindh Transport Minister Awais Qadir Shah chaired a meeting regarding the intra-city railway on Thursday, which was attended by FWO officials, the transport secretary and other relevant officials of the relevant departments. Shah stated that the FWO would construct flyovers and underground corridors on the KCR track.

The transport department expedited work on the rail service following the Supreme Court's orders. The department will also construct a protective wall along the KCR track. The Sindh government has allocated Rs5 billion for the construction of underpasses and flyovers on the KCR route.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 04/09/2020)

### **Dewatering and KCR revival**

An adviser to the Sindh government has said that rainwater in most localities of Karachi has been removed and faults in the sewerage system repaired because now there are no gutter overflows. It does not matter whether bright sunshine has evaporated the rain and gutter water or it is due to untiring efforts of the government. He also emphatically announced, on Tuesday, that encroachments across the city would be removed indiscriminately as it was unauthorised structures on and around stormwater drains that choked them with garbage.

This statement recalls to mind the recent statements of KMC officials that they would ensure that removal of encroachments did not render people homeless. The pronouncement came after people protested fearing homelessness during the recent campaign to remove illegal structures. The action was stopped after residents of affected areas protested. Even where earlier encroachments have been removed, the damaged pavements have been left unrepaired. This and accumulation of garbage have harmed businesses and many shops have shifted to other places. This situation has been persisting for the past several years.

The adviser has also talked about revival of the Karachi Circular Railway and criticised its inclusion in the Prime Minister's Karachi Transformation Plan, insisting that since the restoration of KCR was part of CPEC, it cannot be included in the transformation plan. For the residents of Karachi and for visitors, the planned revival of KCR came as a ray of hope in a city where now public transport does not exist. However, the sad reality is that large tracts of railway lines have disappeared, and on KCR land, buildings have been constructed. It looks remotely possible to demolish such buildings especially when they come under jurisdictions of different organisations. One should buy the latest edition of gobbledygook dictionary to understand what politicians say.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 10/09/2020)

### **Centre, Sindh cooperating for KCR revival: Rashid**

The country's railways minister has said the PTI led federal and the PPP led Sindh governments are cooperating to implement the apex court order to restore the inter-city railways in the country's biggest city – the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).

"As the KCR is concerned, the federal and the provincial governments are on the same page. Work on the KCR's restoration is under way according to the Supreme Court's order," said Sheikh Rashid, addressing a press conference at the KCR's Shah Abdul Latif Station during his visit to Karachi on Sunday.

"I am visiting the city to review progress on KCR restoration. Work on the KCR has started and I would be visiting Karachi every 15 days," he added.

The minister said the federal government will take the Sindh government on board on all matters related to the project. "I have had two meetings with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and these meetings have been very successful."

He said Sindh chief secretary and Karachi commissioner are also cooperating with the railways ministry.

"Encroachments on the KCR route and their extent are being identified with the support of the Sindh government. The Supreme Court has ordered that we have to remove the encroachments," he said.

The minister said he visited Malir and Macchar Colony areas to review the encroachments.

He said the Supreme Court ordered authorities to restore the KCR track for which people need to be evicted from the encroached land with the help of the provincial government. Rashid urged the Sindh government and CM Shah to make arrangements for the accommodation of these people.

"It is an obligation on us to implement the orders of the Supreme Court and clear the encroachments along the railway track," he said. "The federal, provincial governments and the people of Karachi should have the same regard for implementation on the court orders."

He said the railways ministry would spend Rs10.5 billion on the KCR project from which Rs1.8 billion would be spent in the first phase. "Twenty four bridges are to be constructed by the Sindh government for which contracts have been awarded to the Frontier Works Organization (FWO)."

Rashid said he will hold a separate press conference on Monday (today) to discuss political matters.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 02, 28/09/2020)

### **Work on KCR revival scheme under SC order on fast track: Sheikh Rashid**

Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that Pakistan Railways will follow Supreme Court's orders regarding revival of the Karachi Circular Railways (KCR).

He was addressing a brief press conference at the Shah Abdul Latif station in the SITE area here on Sunday morning.

There was a bit of confusion as the media was told to expect the federal minister reaching them after inspecting the tracks in a trolley from the City Station to the Shah Abdul Latif station. Then they were informed that he had changed his mind and would now be holding a press conference at his camp office on Adam Road at 1pm. And when the journalists, annoyed over having been called so early in the morning, were leaving for the SITE area, they were asked to come back and wait as Mr Sheikh would be joining them shortly.

Dressed in a crisp white shalwar kameez and black waistcoat with a bright red handkerchief peeping out of his breast pocket, the federal minister was accompanied by the CEO and senior general manager of the Pakistan Railways, Lahore, Nisar Ahmed Memon; divisional superintendent at Karachi Arshad Salam Khattak and KCR project director Ameer Mohammad Daudpota.

#### *Pledges to share 'finalised' map with media today*

Sheikh Rashid said that he was unwell and not in the mood to speak much. He said that he would speak at length at a longer press conference at his camp office the following day. But for now, he only wanted to say that the KCR project was now on a fast track.

"I have visited Nazimabad, Gulbai, Gillani and Machhar Colony railway stations just now and am happy to report that things are moving at a good pace. The KCR is a Rs10.5 billion project of which Rs1.8 billion will be spent in the first phase," he said.

"The Sindh government is also with us and it has taken the responsibility of constructing 24 overhead bridges, level crossings, etc and they have also awarded tenders for all this to the Frontier Works Organisation," he revealed.

He further said that preparation of KCR coaches in Islamabad was also under way and a model coach would soon be displayed at the Cantonment station in Karachi.

"I will myself also come to Karachi every 15 days to supervise the work. We hope to make it happen very soon," he said.

Responding to a question regarding the clearing of the area along the KCR tracks, he said that 12km had already been cleared and they were working on the remaining 30km now.

He also said that he was in liaison with the Sindh government regarding the KCR map. "I will share with the media the finalised map on Monday," he said.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 28/09/2020)

### **Those displaced by KCR will be rehomed: IT minister**

Citizens displaced by the restoration of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) will be provided alternative accommodation, said Federal Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication Minister Syed Aminul Haque on Monday.

Addressing the inauguration of Daraz's new office, he added that the federal government's promises pertaining to the Karachi Transformation Plan would be fulfilled without delay.

Furthermore, he said that though obstacles had been placed in the way of the Green Line project's completion, no more hindrances to any schemes, including the K-IV bulk water project would be tolerated.

"The government is striving to realise Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of a digital Pakistan and making broadband services accessible in remote and rural areas of the country," insisted Haque, adding that new network towers had been installed to provide 3G and 4G services to 1.4 million people in Sanghar and Tharparkar.

Turning to the elections in Gilgit Baltistan, the minister, who belongs to Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, said his party would contest these and the process for nominating the candidate had already started.

The IT minister also stated that the Centre had approved a budget for the plan to manufacture smartphones, adding that Daraz would soon be manufacturing and assembling smartphones in Pakistan. He assured that his ministry would provide the company support for its training programme and digitisation.

Meanwhile, Daraz managing director Ehsan Saya claimed e-commerce was rapidly growing in the country, creating more job opportunities. According to him, their website traffic had increased by 35 per cent during the Covid-19 pandemic.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 29/09/2020)

## ML-1 project to create 150000 jobs, says railways minister

In continuation of his Sunday's early morning press conference, Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday called another presser at his camp office on Adam Road and this time he focused on the Karachi-Peshawar main line (or ML-1) project.

He informed the media that a \$6.8 billion tender for the ML-1 project would be floated soon, and said that "the project will revolutionise the railway service in Pakistan".

"Pakistan will get massive economic benefits in the form of 150,000 jobs and a significant surge in the freight business after completion of the ML-1 project," he said.

*Sheikh Rashid says private firms to be involved in running trains since PR cannot manage smooth operations*

He added that 90 per cent of those jobs would be given to Pakistanis while the remaining 10pc would be taken up by Chinese nationals.

### KCR coaches being prepared in Islamabad

He also said that the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project was going to move forward quickly now.

"Under the directives of the Supreme Court, we will put the KCR project on a fast track," he said, adding that preparation of KCR coaches was under way in Islamabad.

"Rs1.8 billion out of the earmarked Rs10.5 billion for KCR has already been released and around nine kilometres, out of 14 kilometres of the track in the planned first phase of KCR revival, has been totally cleared," he said.

He called Karachi the hub of railways' activity, especially when it comes to freight business. "That's why I am in Karachi today and that's why I will keep visiting to the every 15 days," he said.

Sheikh Rashid also said that they didn't run trains for four and half months due to the coronavirus pandemic and it had caused big losses to the PR though he had plans to make things fine again through a public-private partnership.

### Private firms to run PR trains

"We will give trains to private companies to run them because, from what I have seen, the railways cannot manage the smooth running of trains. So, the private companies can run the trains and we will provide them the infrastructure required for the operation," he said.

Prior to his press conference, the minister also attended a meeting in which he directed the complete clearance of railways land and tracks of encroachments. He also warned of stern action against any PR officer or official found to be involved in any kind corruption.

Customary to his habit, Sheikh Rashid couldn't refrain from discussing politics on the occasion.

He said that all the corrupt politicians who robbed the country [of its wealth] would see the end of their political career soon.

He also said that the opposition could only make noise, and nothing else. He predicted that all people and parties against the government of [Prime Minister] Imran Khan would hit the accelerator around February next year as their agenda was to get majority seats in the Senate elections in March 2021. But in reality, he added, their misdeeds would only pave the way for them to go to jail. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 29/09/2020)

## Sindh, centre agree to start local trains on part of KCR route

The Sindh and federal governments on Saturday agreed to start trial runs of local trains within 12 kilometres during the next two months and then plan how to sync it with the modern circular railway system in the next phase.

This decision was taken here in a meeting between Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar.

Relevant officials from the federal and Sindh governments participated in the meeting.

*Asad Umar, CM Shah discuss plan to revive circular railway in Karachi*

The meeting was held to chalk out a strategy in respect of launching the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project as was decided in the meeting of the Council of Common Interests and to implement the Supreme Court's directives to start the projects in Karachi. The chief minister said that the KCR was commissioned in 1964 and remained effective till 1984. It was closed in 1999 as it lost its operational efficiency.

### Efforts to revive KCR began in 2006

He added that the provincial government approved initial feasibility/PC-I for its revival in 2006 to be undertaken through the Japan International Cooperation Agency and revised feasibility and PC-1 was prepared by JICA, which was approved by Ecnec in 2012 for \$2.6 billion.

He told the meeting that JICA remained engaged on the project from 2006 to 2012, but unfortunately, the earlier agreed financing arrangement could not materialise.

Mr Shah said that given the stalemate on JICA financing, he took up the matter with the then prime minister on Dec 3, 2016 and requested him for inclusion of the KCR under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), issuance of a sovereign guarantee for the KCR revitalization, handing over of the Karachi Urban Transport Corporation (KUTC) to the Sindh government for construction and management of the KCR, handing over the right of way (ROW) to KUTC-Sindh government.

He added that the prime minister had approved all his requests and for handing over ROW a committee was formed to seek options. "The KCR loop has an overlapping section of 12 kilometres with Pakistan Railways project ML-1 launched under CPEC framework," he added.

Mr Shah said that he followed up the matter with the federal government throughout 2017 and 2018.

"I personally followed up at every stage and [have] written a dozen letters to the federal government on the matter," he said and added Ecnec approved the project on Oct 6, 2017 for Rs207.6bn (\$1.97bn) through a Chinese loan and the administrative approval of the project was issued by Sindh Transport and Mass Transit Dept on Nov 8, 2017.

The chief minister said the project was supposed to be completed within 36 months.

It may be noted that the length of the KCR project was 43.13km, including 14.95km on ground and 28.18km elevated. It would have 24 stations and its per-day ridership would be around 550,000.

Mr Shah said that the KCR project was agreed in CPEC-related JCC meeting on Dec 29, 2016. "On Nov 22, 2017 the JCC confirmed that the KCR project is technically qualified and mature for implementation," he said.

He added that on Dec 20, 2018 the importance of KCR was recognised and on Nov 5, 2019 it was decided that Pakistan would submit a financing request to the Chinese government. "After this no further progress could be attained," he said.

Federal Minister Umar said that the federal government was serious to start the KCR project at the earliest. The federal minister and the chief minister also discussed how to start local trains within the next few months and whether the local train system would sync with the modern railway system of KCR.

The meeting decided to start local trains within a span of 12km from City Station to SITE as a trial run within the next two months. It was also decided that a highly professional consultant would be hired to study how to sync the local train system with the modern KCR.

### **Three-phased project**

The railways secretary gave a detailed briefing about the project of KCR and local train system and discussed various options to start the project. He disclosed a three-phased plan under which construction of single-line track, rolling of stock, deputation of human resource and operation were to be taken in the first phase.

In the second phase, dualisation of track, signalling, fencing and flyovers/underpasses would be constructed.

In the third phase, the railways secretary said, modern urban rail-based mass-transit, transaction advisory services for public-private partnership mode, financial model and government model and cross subsidy model such as land commercialisation would be undertaken.

Sindh P&D chairman Muhammad Waseem claimed all encroachments had been removed. He said that provincial government would construct flyover/underpasses where necessary along with construction of fencing along the route.

He said that the provincial government would lay a sewerage system between Urdu College and Depot Hill and make arrangements for proper disposal of industrial effluent from the SITE area.

The chief minister said that the federal government had to decide whether the KCR would remain in the CPEC framework or not. "If the decision in the CPEC framework is in affirmative then necessary measures should be taken to acquire the loan for the project and if the decision comes out in the negative then other ways and means may be explored to start the project because the KCR is the only solution of the transport problem," he concluded.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 04/10/2020)

### **KCR slated for revival by January**

The revival of the long-defunct Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) is finally inching towards its final stages of completion. The project, which had been subject to various complications in past years, is expected to be reinstated as early as January 2021, reveals the Ministry of Railways.

The KCR first began its operations in the year 1969, under the administration of Pakistan Railways. Its trains served the Karachi metropolitan area as an affordable means of intra-city transport for thirty years, until the service was eventually discontinued in 1999.

Considering the mega-city's growing infrastructural and transportation needs, the revival of the circular railway was first brought up in 2005, and then later in 2009. Both times however, the project remained limited to lip-service until 2017, when the federal government offered its first restoration package for the rail network.

After remaining inoperational for over two decades and with a city built upon its sunken tracks, the KCR's revival now presented a set of unique challenges - the foremost being the 67 acres, out of the required 360, which had been subject to extensive encroachment over the years.

Already delayed by mismanagement on various levels, the clearing of the path for the mass transit system's construction began in May 2019, as part of the city's anti-encroachment drive.

A year and a half later, with the project framework finalised, the Carriage Factory Islamabad has been told to expedite work on vehicles issued for the upgradation of KCR.

Out of the 40 coaches and 10 locomotives dedicated to the project, seven coaches and two locomotives are said to be on their final stages of upgradation and due for dispatch to the metropolis by next week.

#### **Restoration strategy**

Currently, the KCR project comprises of a 44 kilometre long track, with the inclusion of a 30km loop with 20 stations and a 14km main line with five stations.

According to the Ministry of Railways spokesperson, the project is set to be reinstated in three phases, where the first phase includes the 14km track from Karachi City Station to Orangi Station, the second phase caters to the seven kilometre track running from Orangi Station to Gilani Station and the third phase comprises of the nine kilometre track going from Gilani Station to Drigh Colony.

"Revival work on pertaining to the project's first phase is going on in full swing, while the 12 kilometre track from Karachi City to Mangophr has been restored completely," claimed the ministry spokesperson.

According to the spokesperson, tenders worth Rs15 million for the repair of nine stations and platforms and 15 level crossings have been issued for the project's first phase, whereas Rs5 million for electrical signals and telecommunications were issued in July of the current financial year.

The restoration of the intra-city rail service in its initial phase is expected to come at the cost of Rs1.85 billion. Under the KCR system, a total of 32 trains are slated to provide transport to over 16,000 passengers daily, while the journey time from the first to the last destination will be 30 minutes.

Following its restoration and revival, the Pakistan Railway will upgrade the KCR project in its second phase at an estimated cost of Rs8.7 billion. In this phase, the number of trains will increase from 32 to 48 while the passenger capacity will be increased to 24,000 with the journey duration being shortened to 19 minutes.

Later, in the third and final phase, the project will be upgraded to a modern urban transit system on the basis of a public-private partnership.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Carriage Factory Islamabad managing director Ghulam Qasim said that the remaining 33 coaches and eight locomotives required for the circular railway are expected to be ready for dispatch by November 2020.

"The coaches manufactured under the KCR project can each accommodate a total of 105 passengers. There is a seating capacity of 64 passengers, while 32 support handles have been installed in every coach for passengers to be able to travel standing up," he explained.

(By Waqas Ahmed The Express Tribune, 04, 06/10/2020)

#### **KCR project to be revived in three phases: minister**

Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed visited the Islamabad Carriage Factory to inspect the rehabilitation of coaches that will run on the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).

He announced a one grade promotion for Pakistan Railways workers before he leaves the ministry.

"I already promoted the workers after I joined the ministry, and I will promote them again before leaving," he said.

Sheikh Rashid said that the KCR track is based on 44 kilometres, including a 30km loop and 14km mainline.

It has a total of 20 stations, of which 15 are on the loop and five are on the mainline, and there are 24 level crossings on the entire track.

He said the KCR project would be revived in three phases, with tracks being restored first from Karachi City to Orangi station, then from Orangi station to Gilani station and finally from Gilani station to Drug Colony.

Work on the first phase of the project is ongoing; Rs150 million has been allocated to repair nine stations and platforms and 15 level crossings, while tenders for Rs50m of electrical signal and telecommunications were issued this July.

A total of 10 locomotives and 40 coaches for the project have been handed over to the carriage factory to be repaired and renovated, he said.

Sheikh Rashid said Railways will upgrade the KCR project in the second phase after it is rehabilitated, which will cost Rs8.7 billion. After it is upgraded, the number of trains will be increased from 32 to 48, and passenger capacity will increase from 16,000 to 24,000.

The total duration of the journey will be reduced to 19 minutes from half an hour.

In the third phase, the project will be upgraded to a modern urban transit system under a public-private partnership.

During his visit, Sheikh Rashid also criticised the PML-N and claimed Prime Minister Imran Khan would dissolve the assemblies but would not give any relief to opposition members who want an end to corruption cases.

He said the PTI government will complete its five year tenure, adding that the entire nation was proud of the army and the people did not support the opposition.

"The opposition wanted to sabotage the Senate elections, as the PTI government will get the most seats in the Senate elections scheduled to be held in March next year," he said.

He also lashed out at the Pakistan Democratic Movement, claiming the opposition alliance postponed its public meeting in Quetta because it learned how unpopular it was.

"The PML-N rally in Lahore a few days ago was a flop show and it proved our stance that the PML-N is not popular among the people as they refused to buy their stories," he went on.

He said that the "PML-S" would part ways with the PML-N.

"I didn't say PML-S belonged to Shehbaz Sharif and people will soon get the news by December that PML-N will divide in two parts," he said.

He also posed three questions to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz. He asked who moved the Supreme Court against former president Asif Ali Zardari in the Memogate scandal by wearing a black coat, whether Mr Sharif told the Foreign Office or any other institution about a "secret meeting" with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Khatmandu, and why Ms Nawaz' Twitter account was silent for nearly a year and who gave her back her mobile phone in the National Accountability Bureau in Lahore.

He also criticised Maulana Fazlur Rehman and said his movement against the government would fail.  
(By Aamir Yasin Dawn, 04, 06/10/2020)

### **'KCR revival very soon'**

Project director of the Karachi Circular Railway Ameer Mohammad Daudpota has said that the KCR revival is a certain project and the phase-1 of the project will be completely revived very soon.

Talking to journalists at his office, he said that the KCR revival project had been envisaged as a modern urban commuter service that would ultimately carry 700,000 passengers per day.

"Karachi city suffers from massive transportation issues, however, this service would alleviate the problems of Karachiites to a larger extent," he added.

Responding to a question regarding level crossings and track at Green Line bus area, he said that the Sindh government had been given the task of complete elimination of level crossings along with their replacement with flyovers and overhead bridges.  
(By PPI Dawn, 14, 12/10/2020)

### **Japan ready to provide help in KCR & tram services: diplomat**

The administrator of Karachi has said a road in the metropolis will be named after a Japanese city or the emperor to further strengthen relationship between the two countries.

The Japanese government has been requested to provide experts to develop a park in Karachi as a 'Japanese Garden' so that Karachiites could experience bonsai and other Japanese arts of plantation and gardening. Administrator Iftikhar Ali Shallwani said in a meeting with Japanese Consul General Toshikazu Isomura at Karachi Metropolitan Corporation building here on Friday, said a statement.

The Japanese diplomat said that 15,000 Pakistani nationals were working in different sectors in Japan.

He expressed interest in cooperating with the local authorities with regard to Karachi Circular Railway and the tram service in Karachi.

Talking to the Japanese CG, the administrator said that Japanese products were considered most reliable in Pakistan.

"Japan got fame by growing plants in a unique way as Japanese botanical technology has turned out to be very effective," he added.

Mr Shallwani said that Japan's technical assistance would be very significant for Pakistani industrialists. This cooperation would help both countries grow further, he added.

The consul general said that Karachi's population had tremendously increased, adding that circular railway and tram service would help provide modern transport facilities to citizens.

He suggested that light train would be more useful in Karachi as it occupies less space and has small bogies.

Mr Shallwani said that Japan's city Hiroshima was famous for tram service, adding that this service would also be useful in Karachi. "Japanese companies are doing excellent job in manufacturing sector and we hope that this cooperation will be expanded," he added.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 14, 17/10/2020)

### **Sheikh Rasheed asks Sindh govt to do its share of work to revive KCR**

Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has said that Pakistan Railways is now looking towards the Sindh government to do its share of the work regarding the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) because PR has done its bit already.

Addressing a press conference at his camp office here on Adam Road on Saturday, he said that 14 kilometres of the KCR track from the City Railway Station to Orangi Town had been cleared.

"The construction of overhead [bridges] and underpasses lies with the Sindh government now," he pointed out.

He also said that 15 of the 40 KCR train coaches were ready. "Pakistan Railways will have readied all 40 of them by the time the Sindh government builds the over and underpasses," he said.

#### **Encroachments on PR land**

About the issue of encroachments on railways land, he said that they had approached the Supreme Court to resolve the matter.

"Tijori Heights [an under-construction residential project] is one of these encroachments, too. We are talking to the people who are encroaching railways land. Hopefully, something can be worked out," he said.

*Says PR wants to have a track from Peshawar to Jalalabad, Afghanistan*

The minister said that they had floated several tenders for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor-related projects.

"The best cost offer that we received is now going to be used by us as the threshold for other tenders," he explained.

He said that railways will be increasing the salaries of its technical staff by 25 per cent.

He added that all PR pensioners who have not seen their pension in six years will soon be paid pension regularly, and it will be equivalent to grade-16 employee pension.

Another announcement made by him was that the PR wanted to have a track from Peshawar to Jalalabad. "That way trade can happen from Karachi to Jalalabad, Afghanistan," he said.

He said that he had given five freight trains to the private sector and seeing how well they were running them he intended giving then 12 more.

"When they are running them successfully and Pakistan Railways is running them at a loss, then of course I will give their operations in the hands of the private sector," he justified.

#### **Slams Maryam Nawaz's aggressive politics**

Commenting on the political scene, Sheikh Rasheed said that in his entire political career he had never seen politicians give more importance to "judo and karate" instead of talks.

“Maryam Nawaz’s politics is based on judo and karate, which is taking her into a narrow and dark lane,” he said.

Talking about Gilgit-Baltistan elections, he said that not accepting the results of the elections would be bad politics.

He also said that the Pakistan Peoples Party would not go with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. “Bilawal is being quite responsible. And he has made it clear that the PDM [Pakistan Democratic Movement] is not against the army,” he said.

Finally, he said that he was sure that Imran Khan would complete five years as prime minister.

“I know this already and it will also become clear to you by February 20, 2021,” he said.

(By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 08/11/2020)

## Improving railways

THE upgradation of the Main Line-1 project being executed under the CPEC initiative is crucial for Pakistan’s economy, as recently pointed out by Prime Minister Imran Khan while addressing the launch of a scheme to improve the 127-year-old Hassan Abdal railway station. Mr Khan spoke about the social and economic advantages of the ML-1 project, pointing out that the \$6bn scheme would kick-start massive business activity and generate huge employment opportunities. More important, it is supposed to help industrialise KP and modernise the existing, collapsing railway infrastructure from Karachi to Peshawar and Taxila to Havelian. Once it is complete, it would enhance the railway’s share in the passenger and freight traffic from the present 4pc to 20pc, and offer affordable, safer and faster travel to the middle class. Besides, it will substantially cut the cost of moving cargo up and down the country.

The project’s importance for Pakistan and the future survival of the railway aside, a lot depends on how the Chinese, who are paying 90pc of the cost of the scheme (in the shape of loans), want to proceed and at what pace. As things stand, the Chinese have already slowed down work on almost every CPEC-related scheme because of multiple reasons, the strained relations of Beijing with Washington and the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic being the most important ones. But that is not all. There are indications that the ML-1 project might already have hit snags. For example, the government was scheduled to publish invitations of international bids almost two months back to ensure that work on the seven-year project could start from next year. It hasn’t done so until now because of two reasons. Railway officials privately say the two countries have yet to agree on the proposed cost of the capital to be provided by Chinese banks as Islamabad is asking for a discount. But that is the smaller problem. Apparently, the Chinese are not happy with the ‘irresponsible’ statements given by some important government officials considered close to the prime minister and allegations of corruption in infrastructure schemes such as the Lahore metro launched under the PML-N government. It is advisable that government officials avoid issuing statements that can cause misunderstandings between the two countries. If they suspect corruption or wrongdoings in any CPEC project, the government should investigate it and punish those responsible for it instead of indulging in unseemly politicking.

(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 10/11/2020)

## Karachi circular train resuming on 16th

Pakistan Railways is all set to resume the Karachi Circular Railway operation from November 16.

In the first phase the trains will run along 60 kilometres distance from Pipri to Orangi stations with four trains in up and down directions.

Passengers will be able to commute between Pipri and Orangi stations with a uniform gap of three hours. The first train will depart from Orangi station at 7am followed by subsequent departures at 10am, 1pm and 4pm. Simultaneously, departures shall also take place from Pipri station.

A uniform fare of Rs50 per travel has been fixed.

(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 11/11/2020)

## Will KCR remain a distant dream?

Even as the Pakistan Railways (PR) announces the resumption of Karachi Circular Railway’s (KCR’s) operation from November 16, it seems ill-prepared to live up to the commitment.

The Ministry of Railways had announced that in the first phase of the intra-city rail service’s restoration, trains will run between Pipri and Orangi Stations, making eight trips up and down the tracks in a day. Each trip is to cost a traveller Rs50.

However, the part of the railway track from City Station to Orangi Station remains to be cleared, making it likely that come November 16, Karachiites may see trains running only between Pipri and City Stations.

When contacted, Karachi Railway DCO Nasir Nazeer told The Express Tribune that each of the trains running between the stations would consist of four bogies and a brake van and could accommodate up to 500 passengers. However, he could not confirm whether the train service would be restricted from Pipri to City Station.

According to railway officials, the tracks between the Pipri and Orangi Stations run over 60 kilometres (km), while those between City and Orangi Stations cover a distance of 14km.

Sources in Pakistan Railways, on the condition of anonymity, told The Express Tribune that the decision to resume the KCR's operations was taken in haste and no proper preparations had been made for the purpose. There are multiple technical snags that need to be addressed before the resumption of train operations, they opined.

They further pointed out that Orangi Station only had a single track, as a result of which shunting trains and brake vans could take longer. The only way out of it is through installing two locomotives for each train, they claimed.

Meanwhile, a survey conducted by The Express Tribune revealed that the railway tracks had sunk into the ground at many locations and were covered by heaps of garbage at numerous other points.

Tracks running through Machhar Colony, near Wazir Mansion and in Orangi Town, as well as in other places, have also become rusty and unsuitable for use, while the loop line connecting Orangi and City Stations is in derelict condition and the one connecting Orangi and Wazir Mansion Stations is strewn with garbage and trash cans.

Orangi Station itself does not present a pleasant picture. Its ticket house is in ruins, deprived of any doors and windows. Covered in dirt, it has become a gathering point for drug addicts. Outside, the platforms at the station, too, are in dilapidated condition.

On the other hand, at some other stations, there are no railway gates and almost all stations have no waiting area for passengers.

Besides, at many spots, encroachments remain within 10 feet of the railway track, posing another hurdle in the way of the railway service's restoration.

The announcement of the KCR operations' resumption came a day after the Supreme Court issued contempt notices to Sindh's chief secretary and the railways secretary for failing to remove encroachments from the defunct transport system's tracks.

The bench had noted that despite its repeated orders, the authorities had not started work for removing encroachments from the tracks of the KCR. Expressing displeasure over this non-compliance, Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed said that the bench would also summon the prime minister and Sindh chief minister, if needed.

Meanwhile, Justice Ijazul Ahsan said the issue of encroachments could not be resolved through mere correspondences among officials. In this way, even five years would pass without any development on ground, he added.

On August 10, the apex court had directed officials to ensure that the KCR becomes operational this year.

"The deadline given [for the KCR's restoration] has expired. Why has it not been restored?" the CJ had asked the railways secretary.

The secretary replied that there were obstructions due to the Green Line bus rapid transit project in the city. The court had ordered authorities to complete underpasses, flyovers, fencing and other work related to the KCR within the stipulated time. (By Vakeel Rao The Express Tribune, 04, 12/11/2020)

### **PR all set to launch partial KCR operation on 19th**

The Pakistan Railways (PR) is all set to operate 14km cleared stretch of the around 55km route of the old Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) from Nov 19, hoping to revive operations on the remaining portion in collaboration with the provincial government.

The PR also pledges to start civil work on the new KCR after completion of the necessary preparatory works.

"Under direction of the Supreme Court [restoration of the old KCR and launch of the new KCR projects], we are all set to start running newly refurbished trains at the existing rehabilitated infrastructure [track, signals etc] from November 19," PR's chairman Dr Habib Ur Rehman Gilani told a group of journalists at a media briefing on Saturday.

"Since there are some problems related to Covid-19, procurement, labour, etc, we will start running trains [Karachi City-Orangi-Karachi City] at the completed portion [14km] of the entire 55km old KCR route. The operation on the remaining route will also be launched after Nov 19 — probably in the same or next month."

*The railways chairman says the new KCR project will be completed in two and a half years*

Dr Gilani said the most important thing was the launch of the civil work on the new KCR that would be completed on the loop line having crossing-free 80km speed (maximum) with fencing on both sides of the track.

"The new KCR would be completed within a period of two and half years. And it will be a gift from us to the people of Karachi from our side. Moreover, it will be built under public-private partnership, as it will have maximum investments from private firms," the chairman explained.

**KCR to be run on electricity**

He said the new KCR would have a double track with running of trains on electricity like the Lahore Orange Line.

Earlier, while speaking at a press conference, the Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid said the old KCR operation would consist of 15 passenger coaches.

“Our Islamabad carriage factory has refurbished these coaches on its own. Moreover, the third phase of the KCR would consist of the entire new track and new coaches, locomotives, infrastructure etc,” he said.

Rashid said the finance ministry had approved funds for clearing of billions of rupees dues of the railways pensioners.

To a question, he said the entire documentation for the ML-1 project had been completed.

“All documentation has been completed in this regard. And now we want someone important from China to come here and inaugurate it,” he said, adding that the international tenders for the project would be floated till December 20.

(By Khalid Hasnain Dawn, 14, 15/11/2020)

**KCR runs into another hurdle**

Confusion mars the resumption of services for Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), with reports emerging that it has been deferred to November 19 while Karachi Railways DCO Nasir Nazeer denies being officially informed of any such development.

Talking to The Express Tribune on Saturday, he said November 16 was fixed as the initial date for the resumption of the train service but the Federal Railways Minister later announced to the media that it had been postponed to November 19.

“But we haven’t been officially informed about it and have been making preparations to restore the services on November 16, as decided initially,” he added.

Meanwhile, sources in the Pakistan Railways, who requested anonymity, said the resumption of the intra-city railway service had been postponed due to “inadequate arrangements, operational, administrative and technical issues and the absence of facilities on the KCR route between City and Orangi Stations.”

The Ministry of Railways had announced earlier this week that in the first phase of the intra-city rail service’s restoration, trains would run between Pipri and Orangi Stations, making eight trips up and down the tracks in a day, from November 16.

However, even then, the possibility of that happening remained doubtful for multiple reasons.

The part of the railway track from City Station to Orangi Station was yet to be cleared and sources in Pakistan Railways had disclosed to The Express Tribune that the decision to resume the KCR’s operations was taken in haste and no proper preparations had been made for the purpose. There are multiple technical snags that need to be addressed, they had added.

Separately, a survey conducted by The Express Tribune had laid bare the derelict state of the KCR track at various spots, lack of facilities at most stations and the ruinous condition of Orangi Station, where the ticket-house was found to be lacking any doors and windows, covered in dirt, and being used as a gathering point for drug addicts.

Confirming this, PR sources told The Express Tribune that the debris of razed encroachments still piled up on the KCR track and lack of arrangements for a ticket booth just two days before the resumption of the train service were the primary reasons why the initial resumption date had been changed to November 19.

They said the removal of debris had been initiated and the revamp of the damaged track connecting Orangi and City Stations was underway, adding that it was likely that the KCR service would be resumed in the coming week.

According to railways officials, to compensate for the lack of ticket booths, the PR had decided to appoint ‘mobile ticket clerks’ who will sell tickets to passengers in the trains.

(By Vakeel Rao The Express Tribune, 04, 15/11/2020)

**KCR plans leave one school in tatters**

The decades-old building of SITE Model School is in ruins with no boundary wall, leaving students and teachers unsafe.

A part - around 40 per cent - of this girls school was razed during the anti-encroachment drive conducted to clear the path for Karachi Circular Railway and the debris continues to lie there as vestiges of the better past.

With no walls along its periphery and nearly half of the building demolished, most classes are now being conducted in the school’s ground, under the open sky and sans proper furniture.

The yet to be lifted debris, on the other hand, has attracted several drug addicts, besides being home to stray dogs.

Moreover, a vocational training centre was earlier set up on the school's premises with the assistance of a private partner.

However, in the absence of a boundary wall, all equipment from the centre was stolen during the lockdown, when the school remained closed for a long period. The vocational training centre now lies idle.

Consequently, most parents are no longer willing let their daughters attend school.

The teaching staff fears that the facility will soon shut down if its building was not reconstructed at the earliest as in the absence of a boundary wall, it was not just students whose safety was at risk, but also of teachers.

They claimed the debris that collected after the building's partial demolition could not be removed due to the lack of funds and urged the Sindh government to build a wall and clear the rubble so that students could study in peace.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 16/11/2020)

### 11 KCR coaches, two locomotives arrive in city

The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) coaches that were being manufactured at the combined freight international (CFI) carriage factory in Islamabad arrived at City Railway Station early on Monday.

There are 11 white- and blue-coloured coaches with a green and red stripe, which completely stand apart from the regular Pakistan Railways inter-city green trains, that have also arrived with two matching locomotives. The locomotives are part of General Motors Universal-15 (GMU-15) series 48.

City Railway Station superintendent Abdullah explained to [Dawn](#) the locomotives are to be attached to both ends of the train to help it move both ways.

The coaches all have white interiors and blue doors and seating. There are single as well as three-seat options in all the coaches for passengers.

#### No air-conditioners

"They also have big airy windows on either side as none of the coaches are going to be air-conditioned," said Mr Abdullah, who felt proud to have witnessed a historic moment on Monday as the coaches arrived from Rawalpindi and were officially handed over to the City Station.

*A partial operation of KCR from Pipri to Orangi stations will begin on Thursday*

Each coach is having capacity for 100 passengers. Of them, 64 can travel while sitting and 36 can do it standing up in the aisle areas. For that there are handles in place, too.

The first phase of the KRC train operation is due to begin from Nov 19 (Thursday).

In the first phase, the trains will run along 60-kilometre distance from Pipri to Orangi stations with four trains in up and down directions. In other words there will be eight trains, with four leaving from Orangi and four from Pipri from morning to afternoon enabling the passengers to commute between Pipri and Orangi stations with a uniform gap of three hours.

#### Rs50 per travel fare

Every day, the first train will depart from Orangi station at 7am followed by subsequent departures at 10am, 1pm and 4pm. The departures will also be taking place from Pipri station.

The fare has been fixed at Rs50 per travel.

Soon after their arriving at the City Station, the new KCR coaches were taken to the station's washing line.

"They may be new but they have travelled here all the way from Rawalpindi. We need to have them cleaned and spick and span before Thursday," said Mr Abdullah. "Basically, all trains are sent to the washing lines after arrival and ahead of their next departure," he explained.

Security in the KCR trains will be handled by the Railway Police. A constable said that he has never travelled by the local train.

"I was very young when the local trains stopped running here. But I have heard about them from my father and grandfather, both of whom were also with the Railway Police. They used to take the local to get anywhere in the city. Their other means of transport was a bicycle. They never travelled by bus, taxi or rickshaw although I have only used the latter means of transport for personal use," he said.

He added that he was as excited to see the KCR back on track as any other citizen of Karachi.

(By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 17/11/2020)

## After 20 years city gets back its local train, albeit partially

"By running the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) trains, Pakistan Railways has achieved another big milestone," said Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed before inaugurating the first KCR train in which he later also travelled with media persons from the City Railway Station to the Cantonment Railway Station and back on Thursday.



It was a historic occasion, surely, to finally be travelling on the local train many had only heard stories about. The first train was decorated with glitter strings, green and white balloons, etc. All of its coaches were bright and roomy allowing social distancing. The seating, too, was very comfortable. There were tables between certain seats as well which can be used by passengers to have snacks.

On Thursday, the individual occupying that seat used the table to place his newspapers and magazines on. He seemed to be a voracious reader who was making good use of the table. "I have travelled in the local trains when they used to run in this city, but this is a very nice and clean train. The old local trains were filthy with walls covered with paan stains," he told Dawn. Asked how long before these trains also reach the same fate, the gentleman only shrugged.

The railways minister also announced that he had reduced the ticket cost from the earlier announced Rs50 to Rs30 with the first day's travel to be free for all passengers. "I am reducing the fare by Rs20. Also you can get passes made for Rs750, which will remain valid for a month," he informed.

"It's been more than two decades for the KCR operations to have ceased but the local train is back on track now and all credit for it goes to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Imran Khan's government, Pakistan Railways and the Sindh government," he said.

"The Sindh government has awarded tenders to the Frontier Works Organisation for the construction of bridges, overhead and underpasses. As their construction is completed we will increase the distance of KCR. We will also make KCR operations modern within the span of one year," he said.

*City Station to Orangi service to start in next phase*

"The KCR operations will be partial for now as there will only be two KCR trains to run twice a day. We are going to run the train on 46 kilometres for now and the remaining 14km will be added to the distance in the next 15 days in order to complete the loop as 12 crossing barriers are installed at the crossings to avoid any traffic mishaps," he explained.

"Very soon we will make it four trains up and down and from there we will go up to 10 trains a day. We will also have 40 KCR train coaches ready by then," he said.

### Encroachments on railways land to be removed

Sheikh Rasheed also said that since the KCR tracks were not in use for over 20 years, encroachers or the qabza mafia took over Railways' land and even built over the tracks. "There is Tijori Heights that has been constructed on Railways' land, there are encroachments all around Gilani Railway Station. Then these people sitting on our land take stay orders from courts so that no one can remove them. They claim that the land belonged to their forefathers but they are lying as it is all Railways' property," he said.

"But the Sindh government has Supreme Court's orders to clear up this land. They are cooperating with us, for which we are grateful to them," he said.

Responding to a question, the railways minister said that they might run locomotives on LNG, which would be more feasible, but first they must check if the engines would even run on it. "We don't want to damage our engines," he pointed out.

Sheikh Rasheed also said that if the private sector can run the KCR operation more smoothly, he would definitely think about handing it over to them.

### New train schedule

As per its new schedule, the first train for the general public will be departing from Pipri Railway Station at 7am on Friday. Touching Malir Halt and Drigh Road, it will reach City Railway Station at 8.30am.

The second train from Pipri will leave at 4.30pm to reach City Station by 6pm.

From the City Station, the KCR train will depart at 7am. This train will make brief stopovers at Cantonment Railway Station, Drigh Road and Airport Halt to reach Pipri at 8.30am.

The second train from City Station will depart at 5pm to reach Pipri at 6.30pm through the same route.

The said timings are for Nov 20 to Nov 30.

In the next phase, the train will travel from the City Station to Orangi.

This will happen after the tracks between this distance have been completely restored. It is explained by a Pakistan Railways spokesperson that the 14km-long track along the route has been cleared but a little time is still required for restoration of crossings and stations there. This route is expected to be restored between Dec 15 to Dec 30 now.

(By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 20/11/2020)

### **After 21 years, Karachi Circular Railway begins partial operations**

After being out of commission for 21 years, the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) began partial operations on Thursday over a cleared 14-kilometre stretch of its old route.

But as Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed celebrated the development as a 'gift for Karachiites', experts and officials voiced concerns about whether the latest attempt to revive the mass transit service is doomed from the get-go.

The KCR revival project, in its present form, covers a 44km route that includes a 30km loop with 20 stations and 14km main line with five stations. Thursday's inauguration focused on the first of three phases, which will see trains run back and forth along a 14km track between Karachi City Station and Orangi Station.

The second phase will expand operations to a seven-kilometre track running from Orangi Station to Gilani Station, while the third will see trains running over a nine-kilometre stretch between Gilani Station and Drigh Colony.

As he inaugurated the first phase, the railways minister said the new KCR project would be completed in two-and-a-half years. "It will be our gift to the people of Karachi," Rasheed announced, as he hit back against a "powerful land mafia that had usurped KCR land."

Addressing the troublesome and delay-plagued process to get the circular railway up and running, Rasheed said the railways ministry was not getting the political support it needed to reclaim the land. Even so, he credited the revival to Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed as well as the efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the Sindh government and the workers of Pakistan Railways.

"All credit goes to the Chief Justice of Pakistan who gave special attention to this long-delayed project," the minister told reporters, adding, "I am a friend and a member of PM Imran's cabinet... [and I am] implementing the Supreme Court's orders with complete honesty." Rasheed also said that his ministry was cooperating fully with the Sindh government.

Speaking to a news channel later in the day, the minister also voiced confidence that the new KCR would be prove to be 'more modern' than Lahore's Orange Line train.

#### **Full speed ahead?**

While inaugurating the project, Rasheed proudly announced that with no crossings in the route, the new KCR would run at a speed of 60km per hour.

However, speaking to *The Express Tribune*, mass transit experts said that in its present form, it was unlikely that trains would be able to gather full speed.

The main technical issue, according to them, concerned the gauge of rails being used for the KCR. Intra-city transit systems the world over usually employ a combination of trains running over standard gauge and light rail, and feeder buses, they said.

The KCR track, however, uses broad gauge, which is only suitable for heavier locomotives and long-distance travel. Trains running over broad gauge speed up gradually, experts pointed out. As such, they are feasible when there is considerable distance between stations, which allows the trains to hold top speed for longer travel duration. In cities, since stations are situated closer to each other, it is impossible for broad gauge trains to run full steam, they added.

Coupled with the lack of feeder buses, experts said this would make a KCR commute excruciatingly long for consumers. Running trains over broad gauge will also increase operational costs, they pointed out.

#### **Avoiding contempt**

Speaking to *The Express Tribune* on condition of anonymity, sources associated with the project said the authorities are already aware of these potential issues. "Top Pakistan Railways officials are well aware of this, but they want to avoid contempt of court," a Sindh Transport Department official claimed.

"The Supreme Court ordered the restoration of KCR a year-and-a-half ago, but Pakistan Railways took no concrete steps," he said. "Now, they are going about it in an ad-hoc fashion, which will doom the project to failure before it starts and cost a lot of money in the process."

Other officials also pointed out that the first phase of KCR only focuses on the main line, which was unaffected by encroachment. "Trains already use this track for inter-city travel," one official said. "The main issue with reviving KCR is the remaining 44km, which now lies in the midst of densely populated areas."

(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 20/11/2020)

### First four KCR trains complete runs

The first four Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) trains for the general public completed successful runs from the City Railway Station to Pipri and vice versa on Friday.

There were two trains in the morning, both leaving simultaneously from the City Station and the Pipri Station at 7am sharp. The trains made brief five-minute stopovers at the Cantonment Railway Station, Chanesar Halt, Drigh Road and Airport Halt to reach their destinations on time at 8.30am.

The second set of trains from both stations had slightly different timings for the convenience of passengers. The one from Pipri departed at 4.30pm to reach the City Station by 6pm. The other train from City Station left at 5pm to reach Pipri at 6.30pm through the same route.

Though there were not too many passengers in the trains with five coaches each despite fare for the first day being exempted by Federal Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, people who saw the train chugging into the stations were curious about it, especially after noticing its different colour, and asked the passengers about their experience.

Some labourers also took advantage of the local train to get on it from one halt to travel to the next within minutes. There were also some picnickers on the train, that departed from City Station in the morning, who only wanted to travel one way via train and had asked their drivers to pick them up from the Chanesar Halt, Drigh Road Station, Airport Halt and even Pipri.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 21/11/2020)

### KCR revival

The much-awaited resumption of the Karachi Circular Railway has caused more disappointment than excitement and delight. The KCR services were restarted — albeit only partially — last Thursday after a long hiatus of 21 years even though the railway minister had earlier announced that local trains would resume running along the entire 44-km length of the tracks. The minister seemed to be overly happy about his achievement with regard to the KCR revival at the inauguration ceremony, but hardly anyone is going to take part for the whole, least of all those who have to suffer a lot on a daily basis in the biggest city of the country while commuting between home and the workplace.

Now only four trains will run from Karachi City station to Pipri in 24 hours covering a distance of 14 kilometres — which means a train after every six hours. This is contrary to the basic concept of local trains. Such trains are available for destinations within a city every few minutes. The minister waxed eloquent in his speech but that was only self-congratulatory. The KCR trains, though shiny and ship-shape, are not going to solve the transport problem of the citizens of Karachi. Politicians and the common people have described the latest KCR revival as mere lollipop, and they are right when they say the city needs an efficient system of mass transit, not a showpiece.

The so-called revival has come under fire from railway experts as well. In his speech, the minister even dabbled in technical matters — though a stranger to the technical aspects of railways — when he said that the trains would travel at a speed of 60km an hour, which experts described as impracticable. The trains will fail to serve their purpose in the absence of feeder buses. In the recent past too, the KCR had been revived with one train travelling between City and Pipri stations. This was, however, abruptly discontinued after less than a year on the pretext that it was causing losses to the railways.

So for now, this is all what's available as Karachi's answer to Lahore's Orange Train.  
(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 22/11/2020)

### KCR's rebirth

EVEN though it is no cause for jubilation, as Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed would have us believe, it is no reason for going into mourning either. It is a bit of good news, and encourages us to believe that our rulers can sometimes do good. On Thursday, some two frustrating decades after it was wound up, the Karachi Circular Railway chugged along its tracks for a modest — and basically symbolic — run to conform to a Supreme Court order and thus avoid contempt. 'Circular' by nomenclature, the KCR's initial run is rather straight, with trains taking an excruciatingly long 90 minutes to travel between Pipri and City Station, a distance of 46 km. Though the ebullient minister reduced the fare from Rs50 to Rs30, it is doubtful if the KCR trains' speed will attract commuters en masse. To be worth its name, an urban mass transit system should be comfortable and fast. The KCR has neither of these attributes. In fact, it is absurd to think of the KCR in terms of a mass transit system for a sprawling city of many millions like Karachi. Even when the loop is complete after the Frontier Works Organisation has done its job on bridges and underground passages, the KCR will be a mere adjunct to Karachi's ambitious and idyllic mass transit plan, which for decades has continued to exist only on paper.

In theory, Pakistan's biggest city will have four bus rapid transit lines running along 113 km of roads. However, such is the 'progress' on the BRT project that the Rs16bn Green Line, on which work began in 2016, is still incomplete, while the cost has shot up to Rs30bn. Awaiting attention are the yellow, orange and red lines. This means a modern rapid transit system is nowhere on the horizon. Given Pakistan's political ecology, it is doubtful if Karachiites expect the full spectrum of the KCR-BRT system to be operational before at least a decade. What is lacking is political will.  
(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 23/11/2020)

## KCR expected to start on City-Orangi route from Dec 15

Flyovers and underpasses on 11 out of 24 level crossings on the KCR track will be constructed by the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), it emerged on Tuesday.

Officials said that participants in a meeting held to review the work being carried out on the 44km KCR route at the commissioner office were informed that the provincial transport department had initiated work on level crossings and three flyovers and eight underpasses would be constructed in place of level crossings.

The meeting, chaired by the city commissioner, was attended by relevant officials.

The divisional superintendent of railways informed the meeting that the Pakistan Railways was making arrangements to start KCR on 14km City-Orangi route from Dec 15 hopefully. The route has stations at Wazir Mansion, Lyari, Baldia, Manghopir and Orangi. The commissioner asked all stakeholders to carry out their efforts with close coordination and cooperation to expedite the work for the revival of the KCR as per directives of the Supreme Court.

The meeting participants also discussed the issues of encroachments along the route and on the right of way of the route in detail and took various decisions to resolve the issues as soon as possible.

The meeting participants also reviewed the progress of work on laying of sewerage line by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board on the railway track damaged from the Urdu College to Depot stations.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 25/11/2020)

## KCR anomaly

It is only under the court's order that Pakistan Railways restored the circular railways partially from Nov 16. The action has been taken in haste as is evident from the timetable of the two evening up-trains plying between downtown Karachi City and the suburban areas of Malir and Landhi.

While the official closure time of all banks, including the State Bank and the National Bank head offices and most offices around Merewether Tower, I.I. Chundrigar Road and Saddar areas, is 5.30pm. Strangely, the last train will leave Karachi City station at 5.15pm for Malir and Landhi.

Earlier, the noon train on this route leaves the station at 2.15pm. As such, the evening train will not only be useless for a large number of office workers, but will also not provide any respite from the usual traffic rush on these busy commercial thoroughfares.

Similarly, the first two down-trains from Pipri to Orangi in the morning will reach SITE and Manghopir areas at 9.25am and 11.55am respectively. All factories and industrial units start work at 8am. The SITE area timing anomaly can be corrected by restoring the Karsaz Railway station from where commuters can take road transport to reach industrial areas in the north of the city.

This 'ill-planned' — or rather 'craftily' planned — timetable of circular trains needs to be revisited. All over the world, a business product is offered at the most suitable times and places to create demand and make the product viable. However, in the case of Karachi Circular Railway, actions speak louder than words.

Volumes can be written on how KCR can be improved and run profitably provided it is done in good faith.

**Raihan A.L. Lodhi**  
**Karachi**

(From the Newspaper Dawn 07, 27/11/2020)

## KCR 'already running into losses'

The long-awaited restoration of Karachi Circular Railway, realised after years even if partially, is proving to be a dud, it was reported on Friday. According to sources in Pakistan Railways, the resumption of the intra-city train service from Pipri Station to City Station in Phase-I of the restoration has incurred losses for railways authorities rather than bringing in any profits.

The sources told The Express Tribune on the condition of anonymity that KCR trains are boarded by just 25 per cent of passengers as compared to their capacity, further burdening the Pakistan Railways (PR) that is already running in a loss.

As per them, KCR trains running between Pipri and City Station over the past week, since the long-awaited revival was inaugurated, should have carried around 2,000 passengers hitherto, but the footfall remains far below expectations, at only around 250. Only the trains departing at 6pm are filled to 90 per cent of their capacity, the sources said.

They estimate operating the service has been causing a loss of hundreds of thousands of rupees daily to the PR. Thousands are being spent on the train service but the daily earnings from the KCR amount to just Rs7,500 on average, they said - adding up to not even half of the expenditure. The sources said that a detailed report on losses incurred following the partial restoration of the KCR was being prepared and was expected to be submitted to the Supreme Court soon.

This was confirmed by a PR official, who requested anonymity. "The PR's mechanical department has been calculating the losses and they are said to be adding up to hundreds of thousands of rupees," he said. After being out of commission for 21 years, the KCR had begun partial operations on November 19 over a cleared 14-kilometre stretch of its old route. Though, even then, experts and officials had voiced concerns about whether the latest attempt to revive the mass transit service was doomed from the get-go.

The timings of the train schedule raised questions, with the gaps between back-to-back trains stretching for up to three-and-a-half hours. Plus, though Federal Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed had announced that with no crossings in the route, the new KCR would run at a speed of 60km per hour, mass transit experts told The Express Tribune that in its present form with its broad gauge tracks, it was unlikely that trains would be able to gather full speed. Coupled with the lack of feeder buses, experts said this would make a KCR commute excruciatingly long for consumers. Running trains over broad gauge tracks will also increase operational costs, they had pointed out.

(By Vakeel Rao The Express Tribune, 04, 28/11/2020)

### **Rail traffic suspended due to PSM workers' protest**

All rail traffic to and from Karachi remained suspended for hours on Tuesday as hundreds of sacked employees of the Pakistan Steel Mills staged a sit-in on and around the Bin Qasim railway tracks demanding reversal of the government's decision regarding retrenchment of around 4,500 workers and introduction of a reforms plan to revive the past glory of the industrial giant.

A Pakistan Railways official said that movement of trains remained suspended for more than eight hours and the administration was busy convincing the Pakistan Steel workers to call off the protest but in vain. He asked the passengers to contact the PR helpline for new schedule of trains.

The protest coincided with a meeting of the federal cabinet in Islamabad that approved the privatisation of the PSM and a golden handshake to its employees.

Labour leaders and representatives of protesting workers condemned the termination of services of around 4,500 PSM employees and asked the government to reverse its decision and stop the "economic murder" of the people.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 02/12/2020)

### **The new KCR**

THE inauguration of the 'local train service' between Karachi City Station and Landhi/Pipri on Nov 19 under the garb of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) was a surprising event. This is the same established train route which a few years ago had been revived with Dhabeji Express and was later discontinued.

Therefore, there is nothing new in the revival of this service that was celebrated with undue pomp. In fact, it is the restoration of a suspended facility between downtown Karachi city and suburban Landhi.

The actual KCR route that encircles Karachi stretches from the City Station to Drigh Road/Landhi via Wazir Mansion, SITE, Orangi, Nazimabad, Gulshan-i-Iqbal and Gulistan-i-Jauhar. The people of Karachi are still awaiting its restoration. As things stand, the progress on the actual KCR revival plan is slow and needs to be accelerated.

**Z.A. Ansari**  
**Karachi**

(From The Newspaper Dawn, 07, 05/12/2020)

### **On track: KCR choo-choo's through Karachi again**

As Muneer Ahmed looked outside the window, Karachi flashed past his eyes. The metropolis' high-rise buildings and slums, its dark grey skies contrasting against the setting sun and its hodge-podge architecture - an amalgamation of yellow stone structures from the colonial era and insipid and uninspiring block of the present day- blended together, accompanied by the clacking of the train.

Inside, Ahmed munched on roasted corn kernels on the chilly evening. The plastic wrap from the seat he was sitting on was yet to be removed and the metallic frame was shining bright. Above, rows of lights even brighter illuminated the entire bogie.

His commute had changed over the past few days. No longer did he spend hours stuck in Karachi's horrendous traffic, or dread the ordeal of searching for a parking spot near his workplace on II Chundrigar Road - the city's main economic artery and one of the busiest roads.

After 21 long years, the Karachi Circular Railway's trains had started chugging again - even if providing limited service - much to the relief of the commuters.

According to Ahmed, he is able to save up to Rs500 on average daily on travelling expenses, paying Rs30 for each trip via train.

"I don't have to drive the car each time I have to go out," he smiled. "Plus, travelling in the train is more convenient and comfortable."

Counting the benefits of this alternative for intra-city travel, he said, "There is no noise of traffic, no getting stuck in traffic jams and I don't have to worry about finding space for parking." He added, "I am mentally relaxed while travelling and save time and money."

For Rahimullah, another passenger, the KCR is a much better alternative than the "badly maintained buses and vans" that are often hazardous. "These trains are more comfortable, they're cleaner and they're affordable!"

Similarly, for Owais, another passenger, the time his daily commute takes has dropped significantly since he started availing the train service.

"The departure and arrival times can be improved to match our office timings, though," he suggested, further recommending that authorities consider doubling the number of trains in operation.

Commenting on cleanliness inside the train, in stark contrast to the dust and grime citizens usually encounter on the roads, another passenger, Kashif Ahmed, hoped it would remain just so in the future too.

"It never occurred to me before that we had the easiest possible means for travelling from one end of the city to the other," he added.

Partially restored, the KCR train service covers 13 stops between City and Pipri Stations at present and passengers have the choice to either buy the tickets, each costing Rs30, from either a train station or from ticket checkers after boarding the train. Currently, two trains, each comprising five bogies having the capacity to accommodate 100 persons on 64 seats, run between the two stations.

According to a Pakistan Railways (PR) officer, roughly 90 per cent of the space in the trains is occupied during each trip, and "the number of passengers seems to be going up with each passing day."

Prior to the partial revival of the intra-city service, the PR had shared plans of extending the scope of service to Orangi Station. Announcing this at the inauguration ceremony of the service last month, Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed had said the service would be extended to Orangi Station by December 14.

"Work on it is in progress. We believe that people in other parts of the city will be able to avail the service soon," the official said, however, adding that December 14 was probably too optimistic a date.

A ticket checker, Ghulam Rasool, also said the number of passengers was increasing by the day, adding that most citizens could be witnessed making videos and taking photographs of the train.

However, complained a PR official, who asked not to be named, the service was running in loss because "the fare is unreasonably low."

Replying to a question, he said the authorities planned to increase the number of trains soon and the train schedule would also be reviewed so that it could be readjusted in accordance with passengers' convenience.  
(By Sameer Mandhro The Express Tribune, 04, 07/12/2020)

### **Sindh mulls discontinuing KCR**

The Sindh Cabinet mulled on Wednesday discontinuing the recently re-initiated operations of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).

It considered the possibility in light of the observation that with the "old KCR" being made functional again, the "modern KCR", as approved and included in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, could not be launched.

Besides, the cabinet, chaired by CM Murad, was informed that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) had 66 CNG buses and all of them were off the road. Upon being urged, the cabinet relaxed the rules for the auction of rights of operation, management and fare collection of the buses, ordering the local government department to auction rights for the next five years.

#### **KCR**

The officials of the Transport and Mass Transit Department told the cabinet that of 24 crossings on the KCR's track, 11 were yet to be constructed. The officials said the Frontier Works Organisation was to prepare the PC-1 for the proposed structures and the Sindh government had already released Rs15 million of its Rs25 million share for the purpose.

Approving the release of the remaining Rs10 million, the cabinet observed, however, that the "modern KCR" couldn't be launched with the "old KCR" continuing operations. Hence, it proposed discontinuing the ongoing KCR operations and urged the federal government to work with Chinese authorities to finalise the mechanism to restart the project.

Otherwise, Karachiites being made to travel in old trains will be an injustice to them, cabinet members argued.

**CNG buses**

When told that all 66 CNG buses owned by the KMC were off the road, the cabinet accepted the LG department's request to relax rules to auction the rights of operation, management and fare collection. It then ordered the department to auction the rights for the next five years.

The KMC buses will run from Gulshan-e-Hadeed to Keamari via Sharae Faisal, among other routes.

**Compensation for flood victims**

Moreover, the cabinet approved Rs4.02 billion for providing compensation to people affected by heavy rains in Sindh during the monsoon season this year. It also urged the federal government to match the grant.

Estimating that Rs4.02 billion was insufficient for the rehabilitation, the cabinet requested Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to write a letter to the prime minister, requesting another Rs4.02 billion for the purpose.

The cabinet also provisionally agreed to exempt affected small traders and farmers from paying federal and provincial taxes, in a bid to compensate them for the losses they suffered during heavy rains.

In this regard, the Sindh government will request the Centre to exempt small traders and farmers from the levies.

The cabinet also granted exemption from taxes on coal mining and coal-fired power generation projects in Thar for the next five years, after the energy department reminded the meeting that the previous exemption had expired in June.

**Safe City Project**

The home department told the cabinet that the technical process for installing 10,000 CCTV cameras in Karachi had been completed.

At this, the cabinet gave it permission to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) for the cameras' installation.

Home department officials told the cabinet that the project inception report, technical viability assessment report, bidding document, PC-1, survey report and control room survey had already been shared with the NRTC, so that all necessary documents and reports could be finalised prior to the MoU's signing.

**Falconry ground**

Forest department officials told the cabinet that a Qatari royal had applied for the allotment of non-cultivable land in Jati tehsil, Sujawal, for falconry during 2020-21. They said that he had assured of abiding by all rules and that the compulsory hunting fee, \$100,000, had been increased by \$5,000.

The cabinet approved the request.

**Magisterial powers**

Moreover, the cabinet, on the home department's recommendation, granted special magisterial powers to revenue officers and directed the department to consult the high court on the matter.

The powers pertain to the Code of Criminal Procedure, motor vehicle ordinance, Ehtram-e-Ramzan Ordinance 1981, price control, prevention of profiteering, prohibition on smoking, manufacture and use of plastic bags, among others.

Besides, the cabinet approved the appointment of Justice (retd) Shahnawaz Tariq as the provincial ombudsman for the protection against harassment of women at workplaces for two years.

It also directed Sindh Education Minister Saeed Ghani to prepare a report to review the demands for time-scale based promotions by teachers.

Moreover, it exempted the Sindh IGP from abiding by the Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, when he told the cabinet that he intended to procure 700 9mm pistols from Wah Industries. The cabinet also approved Rs630 million for the purpose.

(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune, 04, 10/12/2020)

**FWO given contract for building underpasses, bridges for KCR, SC told**

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah informed the Supreme Court on Friday that the provincial cabinet had approved a single-source contract to the Frontier Works Organisation for the construction of underpasses and overhead bridges on railway crossings falling along the proposed route of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).

"However, as directed by the court, the cabinet in its meeting of Aug 20 had approved the single source to the FWO, as desired by the Supreme Court," according to a reply submitted on behalf of the chief minister to the Supreme Court.

At the last hearing on Nov 26, the Supreme Court had issued a contempt notice to CM Shah over perceived foot-dragging on part of the provincial government vis-à-vis the KCR.

The reply explained that for the purpose of awarding contracts, the provincial cabinet was governed by the Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (SPPRA) Act of 2009, but still it sought the approval of the cabinet under the SPPRA for foregoing the competitive process of selection of the contractor.

Certain observations were raised during the meeting of Aug 20 regarding the FWO's experience of constructing overhead bridges or underpasses.

The organisation's track record while working for Pakistan Railways on a project for the doubling of track (DOT) from Lodhran to Khanewal and from Khanewal to Raiwind was discussed. It was noted that the projects were delayed by almost seven years.

The reply explained that the proposed revival of KCR, as it was in 1984, would not be enough for Karachi's present-day needs.

The partial revival of local trains (from Pipri to City Station) last month had caused losses to Railways instead of bringing any profits, the reply stated. "With an average ridership of just 25 per cent of the train's capacity, PR earned an average of only Rs7,500 per day, whereas the expenditure incurred in running of the train was several times higher."

### **Rs3bn for underpasses, bridges**

Referring to the court's directives regarding construction of underpasses and overhead bridges on the KCR route, the reply stated that the matter was discussed in internal meetings and despite severe financial constraints and reservations, the Sindh government immediately allocated Rs3 billion in the budget for the construction of these structures.

"I wish to bring to the notice of the court that, apart from new schemes in the health sector (due to Covid-19), the construction of overhead bridges and underpasses along the KCR route was the only new scheme taken up in the provincial budget," the chief minister informed the apex court.

In compliance with the court order, the Sindh cabinet has assigned the task of building flyovers and underpasses over level-crossings to the Transport and Mass Transit Department, the reply said.

(By Nasir Iqbal Dawn, 13, 12/12/2020)

### **'No construction to be tolerated on KCR land'**

No construction will be tolerated on Karachi Circular Railway's land, remarked Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed on Tuesday as the Supreme Court took up cases in relation to KCR and Green Line Bus Rapid Transit System on Tuesday.

The three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed, directed authorities to restore the KCR completely. The bench instructed that all encroachments and illegal occupations from KCR land must be removed and directed that those who were leased out the KCR lands be evicted.

During the hearing, CJP Ahmed inquired about the progress made on KCR's restoration.

The deputy advocate-general maintained that local trains and KCR were operating without any issues. He informed the court that underpasses are being built for KCR.

The railway department secretary informed the court that there is an issue with KCR's land where work for the Green Line Bus project is underway.

The top judge directed the railway secretary to ensure complete operation of the KCR with the help of the provincial government and resolve any issues that may arise.

However, the secretary expressed an inability to remove illegal occupation from KCR lands. He claimed that it would not be possible to do without the help of Rangers and the support of the government.

The bench directed the Rangers DG and Sindh IGP to provide assistance in the matter and directed the authorities to recover the lands leased out after devising a mechanism for this process.

During the hearing, the CJP inquired about the park at Kala Pul as well. "All of the land from Keamari to Quidabad and around Kala Pul has been illegally occupied. New houses are being built every day on railway's land. Shrines have [also] been constructed there," remarked CJP Ahmed.

The top judge expressed annoyance at the railways secretary and remarked that the Hayat Regency land was expensive but was sold for pennies.

At this the secretary replied that the land could only be recovered by cancelling the lease after the cabinet's approval.

Directing the authorities to recover Hayat Regency Hotel's land and use it for railways by constructing a head office for the department there, the court sought a report within a month.

The counsel representing the railways department informed the court that KCR land near Gillani Station has been illegally occupied for the construction of Tejori Heights. He said that the department has filed a report in this regard before the Sindh High Court's nazir.

However, the Tejori Heights counsel informed the court that his clients have filed an objection over the railway department's report.

"You have constructed the building on KCR land, where will KCR station be built," asked CJP Ahmed, directing his comments towards the Tejori Heights counsel. No construction will be tolerated on KCR land, remarked the CJP.

The bench directed the builder of Tejori Heights to stop construction and directed Karachi Commissioner Navid Ahmed Shaikh to take over the project.

The court further directed the authorities to start KCR operation within the given time and sought a report from railways DG within a month. The court warned that legal action will be taken against the relevant authorities if the project isn't completed in time.

### **Green Line Bus Project**

The bench directed the authorities to ensure that the Green Line Bus is operational by June 2021, and directed the Karachi Infrastructure Development Company Limited to submit a report pertaining to the project within a month.

KIDCL chief operating officer (COO) informed the court that two reports have been submitted earlier. The Green Line Bus Project is being built using the funds provided by the Centre and with the approval of the Sindh chief minister and former Karachi mayor, he said.

CJP Ahmed inquired if the citizens had been consulted before the project was launched.

At this, the KIDCL COO maintained that they take approvals from the city council from time to time.

The CJP further asked whether any bridge has been constructed in front of the Quaid's Mazar.

KIDCL chief operating officer maintained that they are constructing underground passages for the project at Numaish Chowrangi, with the permission of the Mazar-e-Quaid Management Board.

He informed the court that the Green Line Buses will be in Karachi by May 2021 after which, 300,000 citizens will be able to travel through the bus service on a daily basis.

CJP Ahmed observed that multiple roads have been ruined by constructing bridges for Green Line Bus project.

At this the COO maintained that those roads have been restored.

The apex court directed the authorities to make the Green Line Buses operational by June 2021 and sought a report from the KIDCL.

(By Nasir Butt The Express Tribune, 04, 30/12/2020)

### **SC asks Rangers, police chiefs to help railways retrieve encroachment land**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the director general of Pakistan Rangers Sindh and the provincial police officer to provide assistance to Pakistan Railways to retrieve its land from encroachers.

The three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed was hearing various cases at the Supreme Court's Karachi registry. The other members of the bench were Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Qazi Mohammad Amin Ahmed.

The railways secretary and a divisional superintendent informed the bench that work on ML-I would be started soon and for that purpose they required land which was encroached upon.

They further submitted that whenever the railways launched an anti-encroachment operation, it was strongly resisted by the encroachers, and some personnel of the railway police also sustained injuries.

*70pc work on KCR completed, officials say*

The bench directed them to take all measures to clear railway lines and its encroached land with the help of Rangers and police personnel.

The railways officials further contended that 70 per cent work on the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) had been completed and it would be made completely functional as soon as possible.

A representative of the provincial government informed the bench that work order had been issued to the Frontier Works Organisation to build underpasses and flyovers on the KCR route.

The bench noted that its timeline for the KCR revival had not been met by the railways and the provincial government, and directed them to ensure that the same be completed without any further delay otherwise action would be taken against them.

#### **Green Line project**

The SC bench was informed that the Karachi Green Line bus project would be made operational by June and buses and other equipment were being imported.

The chief operating officer of the Sindh Infrastructure Development Company Limited, tasked to execute the project, informed the bench that the completion of the scheme was delayed due to Covid-19 and now it would be completed by June 2021.

The bench issued a directive that it be completed as further time would not be granted and sought a progress report within a month. The CEO was of the view that the Green Line would operate from Surjani Town to Merewether Tower and accommodate around 300,000 passengers daily.

#### **Tejori Heights**

The bench ordered the immediate suspension of work on an under-construction building, Tejori Heights, in Gulshan-i-Iqbal near the abandoned Gilani railway station on the KCR and barred it from creating a third-party interest.

After hearing both sides, the bench while dictating an interim order, said that on the basis of documents, prima facie there was no right of Tejori Heights on the land in question and directed the commissioner of Karachi to take over the construction site till further order.

The lawyer for Pakistan Railways contended that the land belonged to the railways and an illegal construction was being made on the basis of forged documents. He maintained that a nazir of the Sindh High Court in his report also confirmed that the land belonged to railways.

Senior lawyer Mian Raza Rabbani was representing Tejori Heights and argued that they had filed objections on the nazir report and the matter was being heard by the SHC. He contended that his client had purchased the land and also had all the documents.

The chief justice expressed displeasure when Mr Rabbani insisted on arguing the matter further.

#### **Hyatt Regency structure**

The railways officials informed the bench that the land on which the abandoned Hyatt Regency hotel structure was built would be placed before the federal cabinet for its restoration to Pakistan Railways for use of its own operational purposes.

The bench directed them to come up with a report in this regard within a month.

In a previous hearing, the bench was informed that the abandoned building was in the possession of AKD Securities since the land was leased out in 2004 to it for 99 years by the Pakistan Railways to establish the National Commodity Exchange. While the counsel for AKD Securities had contended that the Privatisation Commission had leased the land after completing all formalities. However, the railways secretary submitted that no land of railways could be leased out for more than five years.

#### **Kidney Hill Park**

The bench directed the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation commissioner to remove encroachments from the remaining 7.5 acres of land of Kidney Hill Park (Ahmed Ali Park) and submit a compliance report on Wednesday (today).

It was informed that the total area of the park was 62 acres and houses built on around 7.5 acres had not been demolished yet. The officials further submitted that on a directive of the bench a private school on the land had already been demolished.

The bench came down hard on the commissioner for not complying with its several orders for removal of encroachments and developing it as a model park. It directed him to also remove the debris of the demolished school till tomorrow.

#### **Illegal constructions**

The chief justice came down hard on the commissioner of Karachi, the director general of the Sindh Building Control Authority and other officials over encroachments on public spaces and unauthorised constructions in the city.

He remarked that the land of the KMC adjacent to Bagh Ibne Qasim was illegally allotted and Bahria Icon Tower was being built on it and an amenity plot near Mohatta Palace in Clifton was also encroached upon by raising a boundary wall.

He directed the officials concerned to take action in accordance with law and file reports. The chief justice also expressed resentment over the SBCA for allowing unauthorised constructions and taking bribes. He further remarked that all those officials had fled after the SBCA DG contended that he was holding an inquiry against the officials allowing illegal constructions.

He said that the city had been handed over to private entities and they had encroached upon the city, adding that as per a news report, the local government minister was directing the SBCA to issue NOCs for constructions.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority informed the bench that its amenity plot in Clifton was being developed as a park and would be inaugurated on Aug 14 while work on another such plot near the airport was also under way.

The bench directed the CAA officials to submit a progress report within a month.  
(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 30/12/2020)