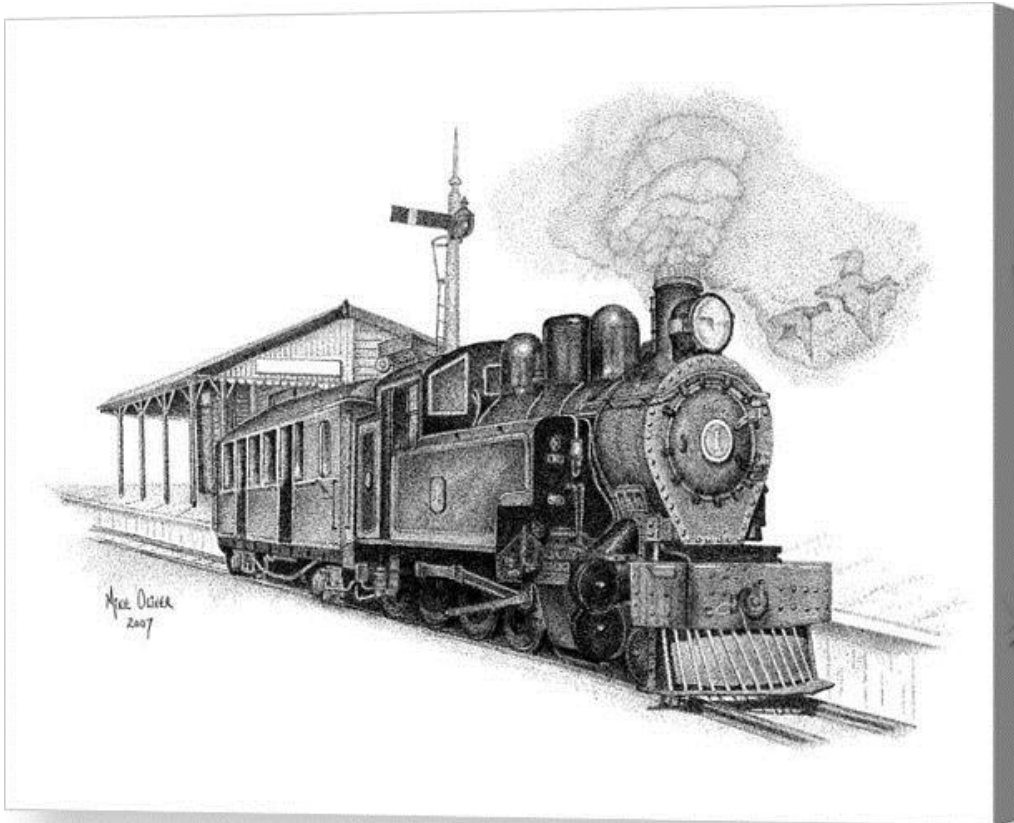


NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2017

KCR RAILWAY



Urban Resource Centre

A-2, 2nd 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, Website: www.urckarachi.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/URCKHI Twitter: https://twitter.com/urc_karachi

Chief minister blames Centre for delaying KCR

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has accused the federal government of creating unnecessary hurdles to delay the Rs276 billion Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project.

The CM accused the Centre while presiding over a meeting on the KCR at Chief Minister House on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by Transport and Information Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Transport Secretary Raheem Soomro and other officers.

The chief minister was told that the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) meeting had cleared the project but later a CDWP member raised some objections that the provincial government has addressed.

The anti-poor bias of Karachi Circular Railway's revival plan

The CM said the CDWP created unnecessary hindrance in the path of the KCR. He said he wanted to raise the issue in the meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec). The federal government assured me that Ecneec meeting would be convened shortly, the CM said, adding that so far no such meeting has been called.

The CM directed the transport minister to talk to the federal railway minister about delays in the KCR project. "If their officers cannot look after right of way of the KCR then its possession should be handed over to the Sindh government," he said.

The CM also directed the transport minister to restart the anti-encroachment operation on the KCR route. "I am issuing directives to the Karachi commissioner and police to get the route vacated," he said, adding that he has committed to the people of Karachi that work on the KCR project would start by the end of this year.

(The Express Tribune 13, 13/07/2017)

Murad wants KCR route cleared of encroachments

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the federal government is creating 'unnecessary' hurdles to delay the Rs276 billion Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project, which has a 43.2 kilometre-long route and ordered the Sindh transport minister to restart the anti-encroachment drive to clear the KCR route.

Presiding over a meeting on the KCR on Wednesday at CM House, the chief minister said the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) had given approval to the project, but in a post-CDWP meeting a member raised 'unnecessary' objections.

Expressing his displeasure over the objection, the chief minister said these were tactics to keep the KCR out of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Recalling that he had been assured by the federal government that the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) meeting would be convened shortly, so far no such meeting had been convened, he said.

Advertisement

He directed Sindh Transport Minister Syed Nasir Shah to talk to the federal railways minister. "If their divisional superintendent or other officers cannot look after right of way of KCR then its possession may be handed over to the Sindh government," he said.

Centre's 'unnecessary' objections to circular railway plan criticised

The meeting was attended by Transport and Information Minister Syed Nasir Shah, chairman of planning and development Mohammad Waseem, transport secretary Raheem Soomro and other officers concerned.

When the chief minister was told that the anti-encroachment operation launched to clear the right of way of KCR had been stopped after the Karachi divisional superintendent of Railways' sent a letter to the deputy commissioner of District Central to halt the operation as he could not look after the cleared right of way, the chief minister directed Syed Nasir Shah to restart the anti-encroachment operation on the KCR route.

"I am issuing directives to the commissioner of Karachi and the police to vacate the route," he said and added, "I am committed with the people of Karachi that the work on KCR project would start by the end of this year so I cannot back out from my commitment.

"I would not allow any delaying tactics. I am also going to write a letter to Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to urge him to call an ECNEC meeting to approve the KCR project and would also ask him to stop the CDWP member(s) from striding over the federal minister's decisions by raising unrealistic objections," he said.

Solar energy tube wells

Earlier, presiding over a joint meeting of irrigation and agriculture departments at CM House, the chief minister said water shortage had affected agriculture sector in the province, therefore his government had embarked upon a plan to provide solar energy tube wells to small growers to help them improve and strengthen agro economy.

It was stated in the meeting that the Sindh government had launched 11 schemes of installation of solar energy tube wells and pumping stations through three different departments at a cost of Rs7.8bn against which Rs2,630.505m was utilised up to June, 2017.

The government allocated Rs2,623.858m for the new financial year.

The solar schemes of the agriculture department include Rs100m solar dehydration plant on public-private partnership in Khairpur and Rs802m for solar water pumps/tube wells on subsidised rates for farmers all over Sindh.

The chief minister said that it was an important scheme which cost Rs1,000m in which the Sindh government's share was Rs802m while farmers would share Rs198m.

Out of the total cost of Rs2,087.110m on the solar schemes, so far Rs859.110m has been utilised while this year Rs200m is allocated for the purpose.

The chief minister said that the solar schemes should be executed by one agency and as such the task may be given to the agriculture or the irrigation department.

(By Habib Khan Ghori Dawn 18, 13/07/2017)

Japan out as China emerges new contender in Karachi Circular Railway project

China will now cooperate with the Sindh government to help it revive the long-delayed Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) within three years under a recently signed memorandum of understanding, the Senate's Standing Committee on Planning and Development was informed on Monday.

Briefing the committee, Planning Secretary Shoab Siddiqui said the Rs270 billion project was to be completed with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), but due to its long schedule the government decided to include the project in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

He said around 550,000 commuters were expected to travel through the KCR daily. The 43-kilometre-long railway line will go through Landhi, Wazir Mansion, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, COD, Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Orangi Town and Chanesar Goth. The route will have 24 stations.

The Sindh government and JICA started looking into the possibility of collaborating to revive the KCR about seven years ago, but the project is still in limbo.

The chairman of the Senate committee, Tahir Mashhadi, welcomed the decision and said Karachi was the fourth-largest city of the world, but a major segment of the population was deprived of effective and affordable transport facility.

The committee was also briefed that the process to award contract for transmission lines has been initiated under the CASA-1000 power project. Under the project, 1,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power generated by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be transported to Pakistan via Afghanistan.

However, the members expressed concern over the transit lines going through Afghanistan. "How can anybody be sure when peace will return to Afghanistan?" Senator Sherry Rehman wondered. "The future of this project is directly linked with law and order situation there."

Senator Saifullah Magsi feared power supply to Pakistan would suffer in case terrorists strike transmission lines in Afghanistan.

An official of the Sindh government informed the committee that a power park would be set up at Ketri Bandar with the support of the Chinese government

(Dawn News, 18, 01/08/2017)

CM plans to launch work on KCR on Quaid's birthday

Chief Minister (CM) Murad Ali has directed the transport department to make efforts to float an international tender for the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project so that it can be started on December 25, the birthday of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.



He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting on the KCR at CM House on Friday. The meeting was attended by Transport and Information Minister Nasir Shah, Planning and Development Chairperson Muhammad Waseem, Principal Secretary to the CM Sohail Rajput, Transport Secretary Saeed Awan, Energy Secretary Agha Wasif and others. Top officials of various Chinese firms also attended the meeting.

Railways adds 55 new engines to fleet

The CM said that the KCR is the most important project in the city and has been included in the China-Pak Economic Corridor after a lot of effort. "I want to perform the groundbreaking ceremony of the project in December," the CM said.

Briefing the CM, the transport minister said that the project was approved by the Central Development Working Party in May. "Now the project is being taken to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval," the transport minister said.

On this, the CM directed Waseem to expedite the paper work for placing the project in ECNEC. "I want the international tenders for the project to be invited in October," he said.

Railways revival in Karachi faces shanty town delay

The transport minister said that there were some encroachments on the KCR right-of-way. Some factories located between Wazir Mansion and Manghopir are releasing effluent on the right-of-way and some cattle pens and dense bushes have also emerged.

"This causes serious problems in the survey work, which is in progress," the transport minister said.

Keeping the situation in view, the CM constituted a task force under the Karachi commissioner with all the deputy commissioners, the metropolitan commissioner, Karachi Development Authority director-general, Karachi Urban Transport Corporation managing director, municipal commissioners of all district municipal corporations and the Karachi DIG as members.

The task force is to formulate a plan of action and take immediate measures for the removal of the encroachments that cropped up after 2013. It will also propose a compensation package for the registered project affected people.

Illegal occupation: '67 acres of KCR land under encroachment'

Awan said that according to a survey by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the project-affected households stand at 4,653.

The railway land required for the KCR right-of-way is 360 acres.

The area under encroachment is 67 acres, including 47 acres on the right-of-way loop and 20 acres on the UP mainline, he said, adding that there are 2,997 structures along the right-of-way and 4,653 encroachers.

The CM said that initial estimated cost of the KCR is around \$2 billion, adding that the Sindh government would release the mobilisation cost of the project so it could be started in December.

The CM said that he was keen to perform the groundbreaking ceremony of the KCR on December 25 – Jinnah's birthday. "I would appreciate if the groundbreaking ceremony of the project is arranged at Wazir Mansion – the residence of Quaid-i-Azam," he concluded.

(The Express Tribune 14, 19/08/2017)

Murad to inaugurate KCR revival project on Dec 25

Encroachments have been removed from the Karachi Circular Railway tracks in district South and a survey and soil testing will be held on the seven-kilometre stretch between the Wazir Mansion and Manghopir stations, setting the stage for Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to perform its groundbreaking on Dec 25.

This emerged at a meeting in the office of Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon on Monday held to review progress on revival of the KCR. Sindh Transport Secretary Saeed Awan briefed the meeting about the removal of encroachments from the tracks.

Mr Memon told the transport secretary to write to the divisional superintendent of the Pakistan Railways in Karachi, the chief engineer of SITE Limited and other relevant officers to ask them to expedite the pace of work at their ends.

Encroachments partially removed, a survey and soil testing to be carried out

The meeting also discussed constituting a committee to be headed by chairman of the Planning and Development Board, Sindh, Mohammad Waseem. Its members would include the transport secretary, commissioner of Karachi Aijaz Ahmed Khan, the managing director of SITE Ltd and others.

While presiding over a meeting on the KCR last month, the chief minister had stated that the KCR revival project had been included in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects and directed all officials concerned to clear the tracks as he wanted to perform the groundbreaking of the project in December.

The initial estimated cost of the KCR revival is \$2 billion, and the Sindh government would pay its mobilisation cost. The project was approved by the Central Development Working Party in May and now it would be taken to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) for its final approval.

P&D chairman Mohammad Waseem was asked to expedite the paperwork for placing the project at Ecne and to invite international tenders for the project in October.

According to Transport Minister Syed Nasir Shah, there were some encroachments on the KCR's right of way, including factories located between the Wazir Mansion and Manghopir stations discharging their effluent, some cattle pens and dense bushes had also emerged, causing serious problems in survey work.

On the occasion a task force was also constituted under the commissioner of Karachi with all deputy commissioners and other top officers. The assignment of the task force was to formulate an action plan and take immediate measures for the removal of encroachments that had propped up after 2013.

Transport Secretary Saeed Awan said that according to a Japan International Cooperation Agency survey, the project-affected households came to 4,653. He added that the Railways land required for the KCR project was 360 acres and the area under encroachments was around 67 acres.

(Dawn 17, 19/09/2017)

CPEC body approves KCR plan implementation

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday said the Karachi Circular Railway project had been approved by the Joint Working Group [JWG] of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor [CPEC], which, he said, was a big success of the people of Karachi. "This is the result of the constant and sincere efforts of the provincial government," claimed CM Shah while addressing a reception he hosted for the JWG on transport infrastructure at CM House.

"Today morning an important meeting of the transport infrastructure JWG of CPEC was held here and discussed all the three projects — the KCR, the Keti Bandar and the Special Economic Zone Dhabeji put up by Sindh government. The meeting participants approved the three important projects of the province and recommended the KCR to Joint Coordination Committee of CPEC for its implementation under the CPEC framework," said Mr Shah.

However, the other two projects, also approved, would require certain formalities to complete before being implemented.

Mr Shah said the CPEC would help build a robust and stable economy in Sindh together with generating sound prospect for the province to revive and expand its road connectivity.

"This will foster a new era of connectivity and offer employment generation and decent mode of transportation," he said. He said a joint Cooperation Committee meeting on CPEC was held in Beijing, China on December 29, last year, wherein he along with a senior level delegation participated.

"We [Sindh government] proposed that the KCR, Keti Bandar and China Special Economic Zone Dhabeji may be undertaken for implementation in the CPEC, which were graciously included."

The chief minister said the Sindh government was taking cognisance of the importance of the KCR, and had approved the feasibility and framework agreement, and shared it with the federal government to meet timelines for execution of the mega project at the earliest.

"The KCR is the integral part of the comprehensive Mass Transit System envisaged for this mega city," he said, adding, there was a high public demand for the KCR with ample ridership of 700,000 per day.

"Karachi is among the most populated cities of the world and there will be ample returns on any investment made in the city in wider economic terms. These economic benefits included reduced vehicle operation cost and travel time cost," he said.

CM Shah said: "We understand that a comprehensive mass transit system is the only solution to address the burgeoning population of this mega city." He added the Sindh government had started working on various Bus Rapid Transit [BRT] lines, which complemented the KCR and tried to reduce the misery of people.

"The investors are, therefore, invited to contribute in equity of KCR and other mass transit systems in Sindh."

The chief minister said Sindh coastline was more than 300 kilometres long; it had two ports of Karachi and Bin Qasim. He added a new jetty at Keti Bandar would enhance the county's capability to export coal with potential to develop it as a full port.

"Five million people living in the surrounding areas would directly benefit from it," he said.

About the Special Economic Zone, he said Sindh had already established a few Special Economic Zones like Bin Qasim Industrial Park, Korangi Creek Industrial Park and Khairpur Special Economic Zone.

He added Dhabeji stretched over 1,000 acres and was about 55 kilometres from Karachi at the eastern alignment of CPEC. "It has commercial viability and development potential in the immediate terms," he said.

He went on to say with the advent of manufacturing agro-based industry, it was believed that economic zone would bring prosperity for the growers of the province coupled with substantial increase in the production sector.

He said the CPEC would prove to be historic milestone in the history of Pakistan-China relations.

After thorough discussion, the provincial government officials said, the 5th Joint Working Group on transport infrastructure had approved and recommended the Revival of Karachi Circular Railway to the Joint Coordination Committee of CPEC for its implementation under the CPEC framework.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn 17, 24/09/2017)

KCR one step closer to completion under CPEC

The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) being granted approval by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) joint working group is a great victory for the people of the city, said Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

"This is the result of constant and sincere efforts of the provincial government," he said. He said this while addressing a reception he hosted for CPEC's joint working group on transport infrastructure at CM House on Saturday evening.

Shah said an important meeting of the joint working group was held on Saturday morning during which the three projects the Sindh government had proposed be included in CPEC were discussed. These are the KCR, Keti Bunder and special economic zone at Dhabeji. The meeting approved the projects and recommended them to CPEC's joint coordination committee for implementation under the CPEC framework.

The chief minister said CPEC would help build a robust and stable economy in Sindh, as well as generate sound prospects for the province to revive and expand its road connectivity. "This will augment a new era of connectivity through which better fruits of economic benefits will be reaped by employment generation and a decent mode of transportation," he said.

CPEC conference begins tomorrow

Shah said that a joint cooperation committee meeting was held in Beijing, China on December 29, 2016 in which he, along with a senior level delegation, participated. "We [the Sindh government] proposed the Karachi Circular Railway, Keti Bunder and special economic zone in Dhabeji be undertaken for implementation in CPEC, which were graciously included," he told participants of the event.

The chief minister said that the Sindh government has approved the KCR's feasibility and framework agreement and shared it with the federal government in order to meet the timeline to execute this mega project as soon as possible. "The KCR is an integral part of the comprehensive mass transit system envisaged for this megacity," he said, adding that there was public demand for the KCR with ample ridership of 700,000 per day.

"Karachi is one of the most populated cities in the world and there will be ample returns on any investment made in the city in wider economic terms. These economic benefits include reduced vehicle operation costs and travel time costs," he said.

"We understand that a comprehensive mass transit system is the only solution to address the burgeoning population of this megacity," said Shah, adding that the Sindh government has therefore started working on various bus rapid transit projects, which complement the KCR and aim to reduce the misery of commuters in Karachi. He went on to say that investors were therefore invited to invest in the KCR and other mass transit systems being developed in Sindh.

'CPEC changing country's destiny'

Shah said that Sindh's coastline is more than 300 kilometres-long. It has two ports in Karachi and Bin Qasim, he said, adding that a new jetty in Keti Bunder would enhance the county's capability to export coal with a potential to develop it as a full port. "Five million people living in the surrounding areas would also directly benefit from the project," he said.

Talking about the special economic zone, the chief minister said Sindh has already established a few special economic zones, like those in Bin Qasim Industrial Park, Korangi Creek Industrial Park and Khairpur Special Economic Zone. He added that Dhabeji stretches over 1,000 acres of land and is about 55km from Karachi. "It has commercial viability and development potential in immediate terms," he said, adding that with the advent of the manufacturing agro-based industry, it was believed that this economic zone would usher in prosperity for the growers of the province, coupled with a substantial increase in the production sector.

Shah said CPEC would prove to be a milestone in the history of Pakistan-China relations, which would not only bring extensive development opportunities to the country, but also bring development in underdeveloped areas of the country. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 24/09/2017)

KCR route cleared, project launch planned for Dec 25, CM tells Chinese diplomat

With the clearance of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) route from encroachment, the project is ready to take off by the mid of December when its tender process will be completed for award of contract, said Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday.



He was talking to Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Sun Weidong who called on him here at CM House. The consul general of China in Karachi and principal secretary to the chief minister were also present.

Highlighting the importance of the projects approved within the framework of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the chief minister said the KCR had reached its implementation stage. The three major projects — KCR, Keti Bandar and Dhabeji special economic project zone — would play a vital role in boosting the economy of Pakistan in general and of Sindh in particular.

Mr Shah expressed his gratitude to the Chinese ambassador for the support and cooperation for the projects. He said the KCR route had been cleared and Pakistan Railways was on board for acquiring the 360-acre land for right of way (RoW) for the circular railway.

"The Keti Bandar project is being processed for preparing its feasibility while land has been allocated for China-Pakistan Special Economic Zone at Dhabeji. "Once the feasibility and other required approvals of the Keti Bandar and Special Economic Zone got through, the projects will be presented at the next Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting," he added.

Feasibility report sent to the Chinese ministry of transport through federal govt

The ambassador told the chief minister that at present 20,000 Pakistanis, students and others, were living in China. "This kind of mutual understanding for development and prosperity would further strengthen with the completion of the CPEC projects," said the chief minister.

He added that he had personally witnessed that the Thari workers, engaged in coal mining project, and Chinese easily communicating with each other. "This shows that Tharis are also learning Chinese."

The Sindh government through the federal government had already provided a feasibility report of the KCR to the Chinese Ministry of Transport while tender documents had been prepared and hopefully its contract would be awarded by the second week of December paving the way to lay the foundation stone of the KCR at Wazir Mansion on December 25 — the birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Mr Shah said that KCR, Ketu Bandar and establishment of special economic zone at Dhabeji would usher in new vistas of development and prosperity in the province.

Aisha Bawany College

While presiding over a meeting of the education department, the chief minister expressed his satisfaction on the resumption of classes at Aisha Bawany College.

"It was the Sindh government's commitment and support of students, parents, teachers and the civil society that education activities returned to Aisha Bawany College otherwise it might have been turned into a marriage hall," he said.

Mr Shah directed the education secretary (colleges and schools) to pay special focus on improving education standard. "This would happen when the teachers would take classes properly, check copies, give homework to students and get personally involved in the system," he said, adding that nothing would improve otherwise.

He issued the directives to all the government departments, particularly the education, health and local government, to properly follow their cases in courts. "I would take disciplinary action if any department loses legal battle in courts," he warned.
(By Habib Khan Ghorani Dawn 17, 30/09/2017)

Work on KCR to begin on December 25, vows CM

The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and Ketu Bandar Port are the two most important projects in the city, as the former will help resolve transport problems in the city while the latter will play a vital role in boosting the country's economy.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said this to Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong, who called on him at CM House on Friday. The meeting was also attended by the counsel-general of China in Karachi and Principal Secretary to the CM Sohail Rajput.

Shah said the KCR, Ketu Bandar and Dhabeji Special Economic Zone projects have been approved within the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and that the KCR has reached the implementation stage. "I am thankful for your support and cooperation," he told the ambassador.

The chief minister claimed that the KCR route has been cleared of encroachments and Pakistan Railways is on board to acquire 360 acres land for the KCR's right of way.

'CPEC to bring prosperity to region'

The Ketu Bandar project is being processed and its feasibility report is being prepared, while land has already been allocated for the China-Pakistan Special Economic Zone at Dhabeji. "Once the feasibility and other approvals of the Ketu Bandar and Dhabeji Special Economic Zone projects are completed they will be presented during the next joint working group meeting," he told Weidong.

The ambassador said at present 20,000 Pakistanis – both students and others – are living in China. "This kind of mutual understanding for development and prosperity will strengthen with the completion of the CPEC project," Shah said, adding that he had personally witnessed Thari workers engaged in coal mining projects engage and communicate with Chinese workers easily. "This shows that Tharis are also learning Chinese," he praised.

The KCR's feasibility report was already provided to the Chinese transport ministry by the Sindh government. The tender documents are ready and, by the second week of December, the contract will be awarded. The foundation stone of the KCR will be laid at Wazir Mansion on December 25 – the birthday of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

'This is my city, no one can stop me from developing it'

Shah said that the projects would usher in new vistas of development and prosperity in the province.

Education meeting

Shah also presided over a meeting of the education department and expressed his satisfaction at the resumption of classes at Aisha Bawany College. "It was with the commitment of the Sindh government and support of students, parents, teachers and civil society that education activities resumed at Aisha Bawany College, otherwise it would have been turned into marriage hall," he said.

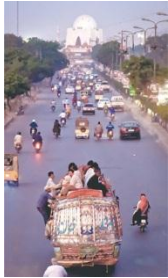
The chief minister directed the secretaries of the college and school departments to pay special focus on improving the standard of education in the province. "This will happen when teachers teach classes properly, check copies, give homework to students and personally involve themselves in the system," he explained, adding that without this nothing would improve.

Shah also issued directives to all government departments, particularly the education, health and local government departments, to properly follow up with their cases pending in the courts. "I will take disciplinary action if any department loses a legal battle in court," he warned.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 30/09/2017)

Senate panel gives Sindh govt, PR 15 days to resolve issues for KCR revival

The Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Development on Monday gave 15 days to Pakistan Railways and the Sindh government to resolve key issues for the revival of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) so that its first phase could be launched on Dec 25.



After a briefing by officers of the Sindh government and Railways, chairman of the Committee retired Col Tahir Hussain Mashhadi deplored the red tape for causing delays.

"The main problem is that you seniors consider only those people as good officers who can find lacunas in files and delay the matter, but in fact such persons are bad officers as they distract from the target," Mr Mashhadi said.

Commenting on the importance of KCR, he said: "Do the officers know how many people will benefit [from] this project?"

First phase from Manghopir to Wazir Mansion due to be launched on Dec 25

The committee was informed that the key impediment in the revival of the KCR was granting 'right of way' by the Railways for the project, whereas a committee formed in this regard comprising officials of Railways and the Karachi Urban Transport Corporation (KUTC), has never met.

Officials of the Sindh government told the committee that the KUTC had been formed to implement the project.

Taking note of the delay, Mr Mashhadi directed to resolve key matters between Railways and the KUTC in 15 days.

"If you people fail to move ahead we will call the Railways minister in the next meeting so that he may answer on your behalf," he said.

Later talking to media, Mr Mashhadi said: "If there was further delay we will seek a joint meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Planning so that the first phase of KCR becomes operational by Dec 25 this year."

While the major part of financing would be provided by China, the only hurdle in the project was our bureaucracy, he added.

The first phase of the project was in district South of Karachi from Manghopir to Wazir Mansion.

Project details

The project to revive the KCR includes construction of 24 stations and procurement of 162 locomotives each with a capacity of 250 passengers. The project is expected to serve the commuting needs of 515,000 passengers per day. It is projected to be completed in three years.

Senators Mohsin Leghari, Sherry Rehman, Sirajul Haq and Agha Shahzain Durrani attended the meeting.

Coal power project

The committee was also informed that brand new and environment-friendly machinery with critical technology had been installed at the Sahiwal Coal Power Project to ensure best results from the project.

Briefing the committee on the project, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Musaddiq Ahmed Khan said the project was launched under the country's power policy which does not allow anybody to install any used or obsolete technology.

He informed the meeting that both units of the plant were operating successfully and were fully contributing to the national grid.

The additional secretary said the 1,320MW project was established under the CPEC umbrella, and was based on Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

He said the plant would produce 9,039 GWh (9,039 billion units) electricity annually, and it would require 3.1 million tonnes of imported coal at a cost of \$434m.

He said currently the coal was being imported from South Africa, Australia, and Indonesia, however, once coal from Thar is available, the Indonesian coal would not be imported as its efficiency was same as that of Thar coal.

(By Kalbe Ali Dawn 17, 10/10/2017)

Railways ministry biggest obstacle in revival of KCR, says Murad

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has said the Ministry of Railways is creating hurdles in the revival of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and he will not let them 'encroach' upon the land which belongs to the people of Karachi.



He said this at the New Sindh Secretariat on Friday while presiding over a preparatory meeting for the CPEC-related Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting which will be held in Islamabad on Nov 20-21, where besides KCR, he will take up Ketu Bandar and Dhabeji Special Economic Zone projects.

Mr Shah was told that Railways authorities were reluctant to transfer Karachi Urban Transport Company (KUTC) to the provincial government.

It was also pointed out to him that the authorities were also hesitant to hand over portion of the railway track from the City Station to the Drigh Road Station for the KCR.

"When all obstacles, issues and hindrances have been settled, the Railways Ministry is now creating an unnecessary issue just to delay the project. It is a conspiracy against the people of Karachi. The ministry was never sincere with the KCR," the chief minister said.

"We worked day in and day out to make KCR part of the CPEC and finally succeeded in our efforts in December last year.

"The people of this city have experienced many ups and downs in the past but I will not deceive them about this important project," he vowed.

Mr Shah said the KCR project, worth Rs207 billion, had been approved by all competent forums and the provincial government had removed encroachments for it from Gulbai, Machhar Colony and other areas.

The chief minister directed chief secretary Rizwan Memon to talk to Railways authorities and said he himself would speak to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to resolve the issue.

Mr Shah directed P&D chairman Mohammad Waseem to complete all papers which need to be signed with Chinese authorities for the KCR at the JCC meeting in Islamabad.

The chief minister also directed Mr Waseem to get the title of the land transferred in the name of Special Economic Zone. On this, the chief secretary said the land was being transferred from the Board of Revenue and the process would be completed by the time of the meeting.

(Dawn 17, 18/11/2017)

Sindh expresses dismay over Centre's intrusion in KCR revival

Chief Minister (CM) Murad Ali Shah is out to measure swords with the Ministry of Railways, which he accused of creating hurdles in the restoration of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).



"I am loudly telling the Ministry of Railways that the railway land in the city belongs to the people of Karachi and this land will be resumed for the KCR if the possession of the right of way is denied."

This he said while presiding over a preparatory session held on Friday for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)-related joint coordination committee meeting, which is to be held in Islamabad on

November 20 and 21.

The CM was informed that the Railways authorities were reluctant to hand over Karachi Urban Transport Company (KUTC) to the provincial government and a portion of the railway track from City Station to Drigh Road station for KCR.

Anti-Encroachment: KCR to trample 4,000 houses

On this, Shah expressed displeasure and said that the Ministry of Railways has never been sincere about the KCR. "From the very first day, the railways ministry was creating hurdles in the development of the KCR so that it could not be implemented under CPEC," he accused, adding that Railways land in Sindh belongs to the provincial government and would be used for the benefit of the people of the province in general and for Karachiites in particular.

The CM directed Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon to talk to the Railways authorities. "I will talk to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to settle the issue," Shah said, adding that he was committed to giving the people of Karachi the KCR.

We have worked day and night to get the KCR included in CPEC and finally succeeded in our efforts in December last year, Shah said.

Anti-encroachment drive launched in District Central

"I cannot go on the back foot now. The people of this city have experienced a number of deceits, but I would never deceive them on this important project," Shah vowed, directing the chief secretary to talk to the Railway authorities and, if they do not agree to

hand over the right of way for the construction of KCR, then take back the land, even the portions where the Pakistan Railways have started commercial activities and projects.

The CPEC-related joint coordination committee meeting is scheduled to be held in Islamabad on November 20 and 21. The Sindh government has prepared necessary documentation to sign the framework agreement on the KCR with the Chinese authorities to start the project.

The KCR project has been approved by all the competent forums for over Rs207 billion. Shah said that the provincial government has removed encroachments from Gulbai, Machhar Colony and other areas.

Now, once all the obstacles, issues and hindrances have been settled, the Ministry of Railways is creating an unnecessary issue just to delay the project but I will not allow this and I feel it is a conspiracy against the people of Karachi, Shah accused. The CM added that he knew how to thwart conspiracies very well.

Illegal occupation: '67 acres of KCR land under encroachment'

The KCR route is 43.1 kilometres (km) long, of which 13.43km is on Pakistan Railways mainline and 29.69km on the KCR loop.

The KCR project is in a circular shape covering Karachi City Station, Docks, Karachi Cantt, Naval Estate, Chanesar Goth, Shaheed-e-Millat, Karsaz, Drigh Road, Drigh Colony, Star Gate, Jinnah Terminal, Hill View, Jauhar, Aladin Park, Nipa, Gilani, Yasinabad, Liaquatabad, North Nazimabad, Orangi, Habib Bank, Manghopir, SITE, Shah Abdul Latif, Baldia Wazir Mansion, Tower and Karachi City.

Shah directed Planning and Development Chairperson Mohammad Waseem to get all the paperwork ready and discuss it with him so that the framework agreement could be signed in Islamabad.

The Sindh government is also taking two more projects, the Ketu Bandar port and Dhabeji Special Economic Zone, to the joint coordination committee meeting. Waseem was directed to get the title of the land transferred in the name of the 'Special Economic Zone'. On this, the chief secretary said the process of transferring the title of the land from the Board of Revenue to the economic zone is in process and would be done in time for the meeting.

Waseem told the CM that the preparation of the feasibility of the Ketu Bandar project was at an advanced stage. "The provincial government will decide the timeframe for submission of the feasibility with CPEC-related Chinese authorities and then the project will be submitted for approval at local forums," Waseem said.
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 18/11/2017)

Railways agrees to Sindh's right of way demand for KCR revival

The Sindh government and Pakistan Railways have come close to removing hurdles in the revival of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) as the latter agreed to hand over a major portion of the railway track within the city limits to the province for "right of way" so that the long-awaited transport project could be revived.



The fresh development came during a recent meeting between Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique on the sidelines of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects in Islamabad.

A senior member of the Sindh cabinet said that the two sides agreed to resolve the issues amicably on a fast track so the groundbreaking ceremony could be performed next month.

Groundbreaking ceremony due to be performed next month

"The subject [revival of KCR] was also discussed in the meeting chaired by Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal," Sindh Transport Minister Nasir Shah said.

Mr Shah had accompanied the Sindh CM to Islamabad and also attended the JCC meeting.

"After that meeting, the chief minister took [up] this [matter] with Railways Minister Saad Rafique. The federal minister in principle agreed to our demand regarding handing over of a portion of the railway track right from the City Station to Drigh Road Station for the KCR."

He said the issue was so important to the CM that he decided to talk to the Railways minister personally.

Answering a question, he said officials of both Pakistan Railways and the Karachi Mass Transit Cell (KMTC) would meet shortly to resolve all related issues once and for all.

The transport minister said during the JCC meeting the CM briefed the participants about the current status of the KCR and argued for support of the federal institutions to revive the project.

"The provincial government has started removing encroachments from the KCR route. The obstacles lie only with the Pakistan Railways which, we hope, would be resolved after the recent meeting between the chief minister and Railways minister," he added.

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. 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.

According to the KMTC, the number of level crossings — points where a railway line crosses a road or any other thoroughfare — also increased in the city, causing KCR trains to take longer to complete their journey. At one stage, there were 34 level crossings on the KCR route.

The KCR finally shut down in 1999, forcing thousands of its daily users to travel by buses.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn 29/11/2017)

Revival of Karachi Circular Railway on 'right track': Saad

Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique on Saturday said that all issues pertaining to the revival of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) had been resolved and the long-awaited public transport project was now on the "right track".

Talking to reporters during a visit to Karachi City Station, he said that he had personally met Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah multiple times and his last meeting with the minister was held on Friday to discuss the KCR.

"I must say that Mr Shah has shown great interest in the project and with mutual understanding on all issues, the KCR is now heading in the right direction for the first time," he said, adding that there was no longer any difference of opinion between the two sides on the subject.

"There are more projects associated with Karachi that would benefit people in all four provinces of the country, including development of Karachi-Peshawar mainline," said Mr Rafique.

By the third quarter of the year 2018, he said, development work would be initiated on Karachi-Peshawar mainline — an important project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The railways minister said that the project would take time to get completed but once functional, it would serve the country's railway traffic for almost a century.

Mr Rafique did not miss the opportunity to share his political thoughts and criticised the leaders of the opposition parties without naming them.

"The political developments are happening at a staggering pace and we see a new phenomenon in politics every other day. I only suggest humbly that all these [developments] should end before the general elections as the country cannot afford any new experiment," he said, adding that it was no longer a matter of politics but about the country's stability.
(Dawn 03, 17/12/2017)