
Karachi Circular Railway upgrading approved

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Railway Gazette reported that conversion of the Karachi Circular Railway into a high capacity commuter line is expected to begin in the Q1 of 2010, a decade after trains stopped. The revival project approved by the National Economic Council on September 3rd could see services resume in 2013.

Opened in two phases in 1964 and 1970, the 296 kilometers KCR starts from Karachi City station and loops around the west of the city to rejoin the main line at Drigh Road, 145 kilometers from the terminus. It closed in 1999 as an economy measure, but there have been several attempts at revival.

The current project is backed by Japan International Cooperation Agency which has agreed soft loans to fund the bulk of the work. Responsibility for reviving the KCR has been delegated to Karachi Urban Transport Corporation established in May 2008, this is owned 60% by PR, 25% by the Sindh provincial government and 15% by the city. KURC is likely to appoint an operating concessionaire.

As well as double tracking throughout, much of the route is to be rebuilt to eliminate level crossings. Consultants have recommended an extra pair of tracks between Drigh Road and Karachi City to segregate KCR services from the main line, increasing the cost from PKR 875 million to PKR 15 billion. There will be a 4 kilometers tunnel through Gulistan e Johar plus 225 kilometers on viaduct, leaving just 166 kilometers at ground level. The 433 kilometers line will serve 27 stations of which 11 will be elevated and 2 underground.

(Sourced from Railwaygazette.com)

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