

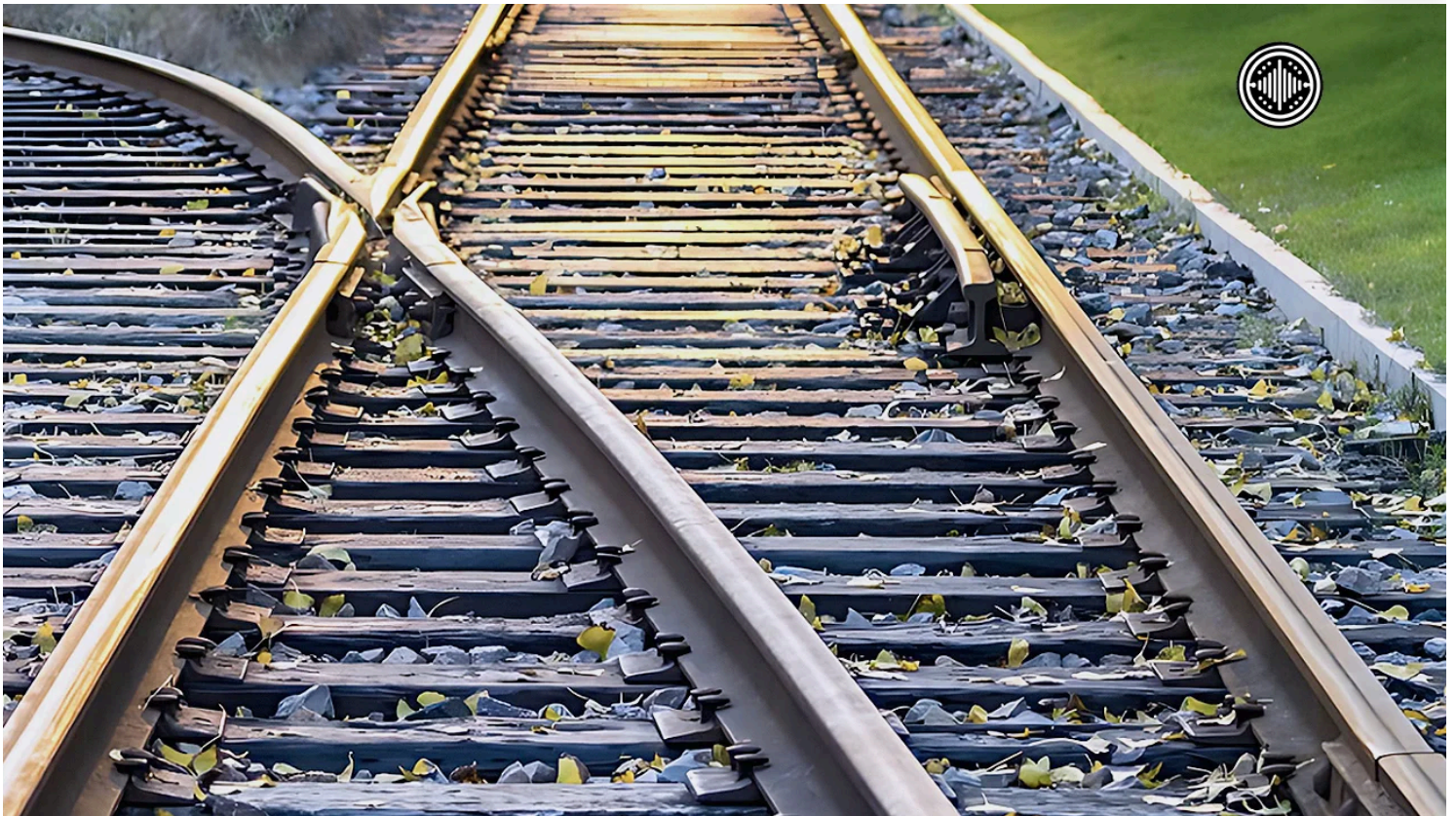
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Pakistan Railways Targets Major Infrastructure Overhaul, Eyes Real Estate Recovery

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– Categories: Real Estate



Pakistan Railways has launched a wide-reaching upgrade initiative, with a key focus on the Main Line-1 (ML-1) corridor, marking a significant step in national infrastructure development. The government aims to modernize the railway network to improve freight and passenger transport efficiency. However, this plan also intersects critically with the state of public land

usage, especially amid rising concerns over widespread land encroachments.

ML-1 is Pakistan's most vital railway artery, stretching from Karachi to Peshawar. The proposed upgrade is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), with the total cost of the project estimated at over \$6.8 billion. According to officials, the overhaul will improve safety, increase train speeds, and reduce travel time, but its potential impact on urban development and real estate markets is drawing growing attention.

As Pakistan Railways intensifies development efforts, parallel reports suggest that over 77% of the department's land has been encroached upon, largely by private mafias. This figure was recently disclosed in the National Assembly, sparking debate about land governance and enforcement failures. Real estate experts argue that reclaiming these lands could unlock valuable space for commercial and residential projects, especially in urban hubs like Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi.



The rail authority holds over 167,000 acres across the country, much of it located in prime city zones. However, decades of neglect and inadequate record-keeping have allowed illegal structures to take root. Officials acknowledge that the encroachment issue not only hampers railway development but also represents a major economic loss for the state. The Ministry of Railways has promised stricter monitoring and fresh digitization efforts to map and protect railway-owned land.

Analysts note that the planned ML-1 upgrade, if integrated with a broader land recovery strategy, could catalyze local real estate markets. The development of railway stations and logistics hubs can drive demand for nearby properties and commercial investments. Several property

developers have shown interest in projects near major train terminals, contingent upon land availability and legal clarity.

The success of the ML-1 project and parallel land reforms may determine whether Pakistan's rail-linked urban development can be revived. For now, all eyes remain on whether the government can turn this infrastructure push into a sustainable opportunity for national real estate growth.

