

TRANSPORT Containerised cargo transported to Kwala via block trains is expected to increase from 20 to 40 containers per day from next month

SGR link set to double cargo volumes at Kwala dry port

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Dar es Salaam. The volume of cargo transported to Kwala Dry Port in Coast Region is expected to double starting next month following the operational integration of Dar es Salaam Port with the standard gauge railway (SGR), authorities have said.

Located in Kibaha District, some 80 kilometres west of Dar es Salaam, Kwala Dry Port was established to ease congestion in city roads and at the port itself. The facility acts as an inland extension of Dar es Salaam Port, handling a significant share of cargo bound for both domestic destinations and landlocked neighbouring countries.

It is designed to be fully integrated with the SGR via the Dar es Salaam-Morogoro corridor, offering an efficient multimodal transport option that reduces reliance on lorry traffic within the city.

Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) director general Plasduce Mbossa told *The Citizen* yesterday that starting next month, containerised cargo transported to Kwala via block trains is expected to increase from 20 to 40 containers per day.

"Each container carries around 25 tonnes of cargo. With access to the SGR, we expect cargo volumes to surge significantly. The good news is that lorries will no longer be required to enter the port directly to collect goods," he said.



A bird's-eye view of Kwala Dry Port in Coast Region. PHOTO | FILE

Although the initial daily numbers may appear small relative to the port's overall capacity, Mr Mbossa noted that the impact is already notable. He said transporting 20 containers daily equates to roughly 633 containers a month, effectively replacing over 600 lorries that would have entered the port.

"Once the SGR becomes fully operational, we anticipate that the annual cargo movement through Kwala will double."

Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) officially launched cargo services along the SGR on June 27, marking a milestone in the country's broader transport and logistics

modernisation.

Mr Mbossa confirmed that the construction of the SGR connection to the Kwala facility is progressing well. He also revealed that the TPA has begun loading cargo directly from the Kurasini area, reducing the turnaround time for goods exiting the port.

"For the 2024/25 fiscal year, our target was to handle 25 million tonnes of cargo, but we exceeded that and reached 27.7 million tonnes. Compared to 23.6 million tonnes recorded in 2023/24, that represents a 17 percent increase," he said.

Mr Mbossa also disclosed that plans are underway to expand port

capacity further by constructing two additional berths within the Dar es Salaam Port area. In addition, a new oil terminal will be built at Kurasini to accommodate four ships simultaneously.

"All these efforts aim to boost the port's handling capacity and promote greater reliance on railway transport."

Mr Mbossa added that while congestion at the port is being tackled, traffic delays within the city are also a result of ongoing road construction. "At times, road closures reduce the flow of vehicles, especially lorries. This is something we continue to monitor closely."

TRC head of public relations

Fred Mwanjala told *The Citizen* that since the launch of the SGR cargo train, the company has already moved a total of 1,400 tonnes of cargo. He said they plan to expand freight wagon operations to accommodate rising demand.

"We currently use 20 freight wagons per trip. Based on market demand, we are planning to increase this to 30 wagons, which would allow us to carry up to 2,100 tonnes of cargo."

Mr Mwanjala noted that TRC currently operates 264 freight wagons, comprising 200 container wagons and 64 designed for loose cargo.

The new developments have been welcomed by the private sector.

Tanzania Medium and Small Truck Owners Association (Tamstoa) chairman Chuki Shaban said the shift to Kwala is a positive step towards easing pressure on the port and reducing traffic within Dar es Salaam.

"We fully support this arrangement. We are optimistic that lorries from both local operators and neighbouring countries will soon be collecting cargo through Kwala," Mr Shaban, who is also a member of the Port Improvement Committee, said.

However, he added that lorries will continue to play a critical role, as certain types of cargo and routes still require road transport.

"The key is for the government to prioritise road improvements. Expanding the Morogoro Road, particularly from Kibaha to Chalinze, is vital for the sector," Mr Shaban added.

Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila recently announced new measures to tackle traffic disruptions caused by increasing lorry movements in the city.

He called on institutions such as the TPA and the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to ensure their systems work seamlessly to facilitate swift cargo clearance.

He also urged the development of bypass roads to divert lorry traffic away from congested urban routes.