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ECO CONTAINER TRAIN WILL SOON BE RESUMED AT ITI ROUTE

ISLAMABAD: Kh. Saad Rafique, Federal Minister for Railways, inaugurates the 9th High Level Working Group Meeting of ECO Container Train on Islamabad-Tehran –Istanbul (ITI) route on Wednesday in Islamabad. The main agenda of this meeting is to identify the issues and challenges for the regular run of the ECO Container Train. During the meeting decision and deliberation regarding revision of time table, revision of tariff and charges, marketing technical and operational issues, infrastructure improvement and development of exclusive corridor management system is discussed.

Pakistan entered into the era through inauguration of ITI Container Train in 2009. By virtue of the successful operation at the container train Pakistan Railways joined the international club of Railways through Iran and Turkey acquiring international status for freight and passenger carriage by rail. The train connects Pakistan-Iran – Turkey and in future can cater for transit cargo, for instance, Europe to Afghanistan, China, CARS and South Asia. The train operation has been suspended since December 2011, due to up gradation of track between Ankara-Istanbul. The track has been completed now and now wants resumption of ITI Train.

A special invitation has been sent to Afghanistan for attending this meeting with the object of working out Transit Trade option through Chamman and Torkham; this move if successful can make the ITI Train a success.

This High Level Working Group Meeting was attended by delegations from Iran, Turkey, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), ECO, officials from Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Lahore, Quetta, Islamabad and Sialkot Chamber of commerce and Pakistan Railways Officers. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the member states.