

# Mombasa-Nairobi SGR train to launch next week

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A passenger train scheduled to operate on the standard gauge railway has the capacity to ferry 1,200 passengers per trip, according to Kenya Railways.



Image: SGR Kenya

Managing director, Atanas Maina, said only one train would operate between Mombasa and Nairobi from 31 May 2017.

## Daily trip

President Uhuru Kenyatta is expected to launch the service that is aimed at reducing travel time and congestion on roads between the capital and Mombasa Island.

The train, Maina said, will operate one daily return trip between Mombasa and Nairobi. The frequency, he added, may be reviewed depending on passenger demand.

Speaking to the *Daily Nation* by phone, the MD said Kenya Railways would announce the fares before the inaugural trip.

The train schedule will also be made public ahead of the inauguration next week.

## Cargo

"We expect president Kenyatta to officially launch the passenger train services next week so that Kenyans can begin to enjoy modern rail transport," he said.

The head of state is also expected to flag off the cargo train on 30 May 2017. Cargo train services, however, will take off in January next year, according to Kenya Railways.

"For freight, we plan to introduce the train services in January next year since we are still doing trial operations," Maina said.

For the passenger train, travellers will choose between economy and first class while a premier business class service is planned to start in December this year.

## Stopovers

"We expect efficiency, safety and cost-effective services when the passenger train operations are introduced next week," he said.

Travellers will reportedly travel faster between Mombasa and Nairobi on rail compared with road.

Kenya Railways has put travel time at five hours, compared with more than eight hours it takes a bus to cover the over 400 kilometres between Nairobi and Mombasa.

Apart from the main railway stations in Mombasa and Nairobi, there will be seven stopovers on the route: Mtito Andei, Emali, Kibwezi, Athi River, Miaseni, Mariakani, and Voi.

Maina said the standard gauge railway infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities had attracted businesses and industries along the line between Mombasa and Nairobi.

"There is a lot of business interest in service provision, accommodation and catering as well as manufacturing along the railway line," he said.

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