



Rail Link between Nepal and India

Why in News

The **first stretch of rail link between Nepal and India** is ready to resume on the neighbouring country's **first-ever broad gauge passenger service** (Jainagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas railway project).

Key Points

▪ Background: //



- The rail link between Nepal and India has been popular since the early 20th century.
- In 1937, the British had built a **narrow gauge line** to ferry cargo, mainly logs, from Nepal to India.
- However, over time it became a popular passenger service before it was stopped in 2014 for conversion to broad gauge.

▪ Revamped Project:

- **First Stretch:** A 34-km line between Bihar's **Jainagar** and Nepal's **Kurtha**, with the Hindu pilgrimage city of **Janakpur Dham (in Nepal)** in between.
- **Second Stretch:** A 17 km of railway line from **Kurtha to Bijalpura** is also getting the finishing touches.
 - For the remaining portion up to Bardibas, land is being handed over to IRCON International Limited (a Government of India Undertaking).
- **Cost of Project:** The construction cost of Rs 784 crore for the entire stretch is **being borne by India** in the form of a grant to Nepal.
- **Managing Body:** The **Konkan Railway Corporation Limited** has got the contract for operations and maintenance of the line, and will train and develop manpower provided by Nepal, as per the bilateral understanding.

▪ Electric Rail Track:

- MoUs have been signed between both the governments for laying an **electric rail track**

linking Kathmandu with Raxaul (Bihar) in India.

▪ **Freight Train Services:**

- India and Nepal have signed a **Letter of Exchange (LoE)** to the India-Nepal **Rail Services Agreement (RSA) 2004**.
- It will allow all **authorized cargo train operators to utilize the Indian railway network** to carry Nepal's container and other freight - both bilateral between Indian and Nepal or third country from Indian ports to Nepal.

▪ **Significance:**

- The line is being seen as a small link to a larger plan of deepening India's ties with Nepal through the Railways, bypassing the influence of other neighbouring countries in this strategically vital region.

Other Connectivity Project

- **Inland Waterways:** India is looking to develop the **inland waterways for the movement of cargo**, within the framework of trade and transit arrangements, providing additional access to sea for **Nepal calling it linking Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) with Sagar (Indian Ocean)**.
- **Petroleum Pipeline:** In 2019, India and Nepal had jointly inaugurated a cross-border petroleum products pipeline.
 - Pipeline carries **petroleum products** from **Motihari (Bihar) in India to Amlekhgunj in Nepal**.
 - This is South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline.

Source: IE

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