

INDIA-BANGLADESH RAIL LINK



Issue

The passenger train services between India and Bangladesh was resumed, two years after it was stopped due to the pandemic.

Background

The Bandhan Express started its journey from Kolkata to Khulna and the Maitree Express starting its run from Dhaka for Kolkata.

Details

- Currently, there are two trains operational between India and Bangladesh. The Maitree Express runs from Kolkata to Dhaka via Petrapole and Benapole border route.
- The Bandhan Express connects Kolkata with industrial hub of Khulna, the third largest city in Bangladesh.
- The Maitree Express has been a success since it was launched. It can carry 456 passengers, the same as Bandhan Express.
- The Maitree express was started in 2008, whereas the Bandhan Express was started in 2017. A third train, the Mitali Express will soon be started between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka.

Freight movement

- In 2021, the government of both the countries started regular movement of freight trains between the newly-restored link of Haldibari in India and Chilahati in Bangladesh.

- The railway link was operational till 1965 and stopped due to the war. It was part of the broad gauge main route from Kolkata to Siliguri at the time of Partition.

Railway infrastructure

- Even after partition, the railway routes were being used to facilitate movement of goods and passengers between the two countries.
- Since they were once part of same province, there was seamless connectivity between India and Bangladesh.
- Policy makers on both side of the border felt that it was a good opportunity to strengthen diplomatic ties by making use of railway diplomacy.

New railway routes conceptualized

- Petrapole (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh)
- Gede (India)- Darshana (Bangladesh)
- Singhabad (India)-Rohanpur (Bangladesh)
- Radhikapur (India)-Birol (Bangladesh)

Potential benefits

Railway routes are faster and cheaper in comparison to sea routes. They save time taken for movement of perishable goods.

NOTES

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