Land Ports - Border Trade

What is the issue?

Safe and secure border is sine qua non for enhanced trade and integration. Here is how land ports have contributed to this.

What is a Land port?

- The regional economy of South Asian countries sharing land borders is heavily fragmented by trade and transportation barriers.
- Addressing this, in 2012, India set up the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) through the LPAI Act, 2010, under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Land port is an area on the international borders including portions of national, State highways and other roads, and railways.
- It is notified as land Customs station or immigration check-post under the Customs Act, 1962 or the Foreigners' Act, 1946.

What are the contributions so far?

- The LPAI has developed till date a total of 9 ICPs (Integrated Check Posts), which are located across India's international land border.
- These are:
    1. Attari - Handing India's trade with Pakistan
    2. Agartala, Petrapole, Srimantapur and Sutarkandi - All handling India's trade with Bangladesh
    3. Raxaul and Jogbani - Both handling India's trade with Nepal
    4. Moreh - Handling India's trade with Myanmar
- Several new ICPs are coming up and their total number is likely to touch 24 by 2030.
- India's border management ecosystem with land ports is very much in sync with the obligations of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

What is the role of a LPAI?

- Manages the ICP properties.
- Develops, sanitizes and manages the facilities for cross-border movement of passengers and goods at designated points.
- Puts in place systems, which address security imperatives at the ICPs.
- Wide range of security equipment - Handheld metal detectors, door frame metal detectors, barriers and rotary mirrors which discourage manual frisking and verification by security forces.

How have land ports helped?

- Trade and infrastructure have a self-reinforcing relationship.
    1. With ICPs in place, India's trade with her immediate neighbours (BBMNP countries) has gone up from 487% in 2012-13 to 63.59% in 2020-21.

2. In value terms - Rs. 327 billion in 2012-13 to Rs. 954.89 billion.
3. The output shift - Rs. 6.55 crore per vehicle in 2012-13 to Rs. 257 crore per vehicle in 2020-21

- Creating a seamless passenger experience by facilitating cross-border passenger movement of over 1.26 crore people.
- Channelising informal trade to formal trade - Potential for replication in several African land ports experiencing large informal trading activities.

What are the unfinished tasks?

- Enhancing and upgrading cross-border trade infrastructure at land borders:
  1. Access and Surveillance Control Systems
  2. Full Body Truck Scanners for non-intrusive scanning and Radiation Detection Equipment at ICPs which shall considerably reduce dwell time at ports.
- Once some of India's connectivity corridors such as the Trilateral Highway become operational, ICPs (particularly in eastern neighbourhood) require further capacity expansion.

Source: Business Line

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