Rebooting of Rail Link by India, Bangladesh

Why in news?

Two years after they were stopped due to the Covid-19 outbreak, passenger train services between India and Bangladesh resumed.

What about the train services between the two country?

- **Maitree Express**- The Maitree Express was introduced between Kolkata and Khulna via Petrapole and Benapole border route in 2008.
- **Bandhan Express**- The Bandhan Express rail link between Kolkata and Khulna was served by the Barisal Express in 1965 which was later stopped due to the India-Pakistan war.
- The route restarted with Bandhan in 2017.
- **Mitali Express-** The Mitali Express will connect New Jalpaiguri in North Bengal with Dhaka.
- This train was announced by PM Modi during his visit to Dhaka in 2021.

- **Haldibari-Chilahati rail link**- In 2021, the two sides started regular movement of freight trains between the newly-restored link between Haldibari in India and Chilahati in Bangladesh.
- The Haldibari-Chilahati rail link between India and the then East Pakistan was also operational till 1965 and stopped due to the war.
- This was part of the broad gauge main route from Kolkata to Siliguri at the time of Partition.

What is the significance of rail infrastructure in the relationship of both the countries?

- Policymakers on both sides view railways as an opportunity to deepen diplomatic ties using cross-border movements of goods and passengers.
- Five rail links have so far been rebooted between India and Bangladesh.
    - Petrapole (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh)
    - Gede (India)- Darshana (Bangladesh)
    - Singhabad (India)-Rohanpur (Bangladesh)
    - Radhikapur (India)-Birol (Bangladesh)
    - Haldibari-Chilahati
- Railway PSU CONCOR has also started container cargo with fast moving consumer goods of private clients.
- In 2021, the Eastern Railway facilitated the import of de-oiled soya cakes from Bangladesh.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-india-bangladesh-are-rebooting-thei

r-rail-link-7946133/

