

## India and France sign MoU on Railways

India and France here Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote bilateral cooperation in the Railways sector.

The MoU was signed by R.K. Goel, Additional Member (Planning) in the Indian Railway Board, and Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, chairman and managing director of SNFC International (French Railways).

The agreement was signed in the presence of Minister of State for Railways Naranbhai Rathwa and visiting French Minister of State for Transport Dominique Bussereau.

The MoU envisages cooperation in line capacity, safety, maintenance and upgrading of tracks, signalling, telecommunications, power supply, electric and diesel traction stock, information technology, training and high speed rail projects.

The French minister is here on a three-day visit to promote bilateral cooperation in Railways, especially the proposed high-speed freight corridor.

Bussereau said France is interested in forging ties with Indian Railways in specific areas like the high-speed freight corridor, safety telecommunications, rolling stocks, locomotives and rakes and high-speed trains.

He said: 'Railways would be the future mode of transport in the face of global warming, as they are fuel-efficient and an environment-friendly mode of transport'.

'The Indian Railways have an ambitious plan of network expansion, increase in rolling stock production capacity, world-class passenger terminals... In the future, the country will require high speed passenger services also', said Rathwa.

Describing the MoU with the French Railways as a very useful vehicle for cooperation, Rathwa informed that India has already signed similar MoUs with the railways of Austria, Germany, Italy, Russia, South Africa and China.

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