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**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Railways**

13-April-2017 18:46 IST

Joint Press Release on Railways Cooperation between India and France

On April 13th of 2017, , Minister for Railways Mr Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, held meeting with , Minister of State for Transport, Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of France, Mr Alain Vidalies . They were accompanied by their respective delegation.

On the occasion of this bilateral meeting, both sides exchanged views, recalled the long standing technical cooperation between French National Railways and the Indian Railways (IR) and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their cooperation in the field of Railways.

India and France are committed to develop this cooperation under the aegis of the Memorandum of understanding signed in 2013 between the Ministry of Railways of the Republic of India and the French National Railways (SNCF). This Bilateral Meeting is intended to build upon and deepen the mutual cooperation already existing between the two countries.

India has over 66600 km of railways and over 7000 stations. It focuses its action in particular on priorities : safety speed upgradation, renovation and improvement of stations, passenger amenities, freight transport and network decongestion.

France has 30 000 km of railways, more than 2000 km of High Speed tracks and about 3000 stations. The High Speed network is still expanding. A global reflection on the place and purpose of stations in the city has been carried out recently and led to major renovation works in France. The security and improvement of the facilities is of course a constant concern in France.

In this context, both leaders desired for regular sharing of experience in order to address the common challenges. Both sides agreed that mutual collaboration and exchange of expertise will benefit the stakeholders in the two countries.

This collaboration between the two countries will in particular focus on the following:

- High speed and semi-high speed rail ;*
- Modernisation of current operations and infrastructure ;*
- Station renovation and operations ;*
- Suburban trains ;*
- Safety systems, operations and Security.*

On Semi High Speed, the two sides have decided in 2015 to carry out a technical and execution study for upgrading the speed of passengers trains on the current rail corridor between Delhi and Chandigarh (244 km) up to 200 kmph. The study is likely to be completed by Sep'2017.

The relevant partners, including government entities, agencies and companies, scientific and technical research bodies and private companies, will be invited to join the cooperation, when appropriate, and under the umbrella Cooperation program of two sides.

AKS/MKV/AK/EN