100th Kisan Rail

Why in News

- Recently, the Prime Minister has flagged off the **100th "Kisan Rail"** service from **Sangola in Solapur district of Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal** via video-conferencing.

Key Points

- In **August 2020,** the **first** 'Kisan Rail' **dedicated to agriculture and farmers** was begun to connect farmers and markets across the country.
- The government has invested crores of rupees in **modernising the country's supply chain,** of which the Kisan Rail service is a new experiment.
    - Announcements regarding **modernising agriculture** were made in the **Budget 2020-21** which had envisaged the **Kisan Rail service** and the **Krishi Udaan scheme.**
        - **Krishi Udaan** was launched by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation on international and national routes** to assist farmers in **transporting agricultural products** so that it **improves their value realisation.**
        - Under the scheme, financial incentives in terms of concessions from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and underserved airports, and keep airfares affordable.
- Despite the challenges posed by the **Covid-19 pandemic**, the 'Kisan Rail' network has expanded in the past four months.
- Earlier, the Kisan Rail was **being run only once a week** but now, due to increased demand, it is **being run thrice a week** currently.
- **Significance:**
    - This experiment will prove especially **beneficent for the country's 80% small and marginal farmers.**
    - The service would **transform the economics of Indian agriculture** while **strengthening the** country's cold supply chain.
        - The lack of cold storage facilities had often resulted in losses for farmers.
    - Indian farmers can now **transport their produce to far-flung places** within the country as well as **gain access to international markets.**
    - According to the government, the **Kisan Rail service** along with the **amended farm laws** would help protect farmers against the fluctuations in demand and supply.

Source: TH