



First Cherry Cargo Train

Why in News?

In a **first-of-its-kind initiative** to transport perishable produce from Jammu and Kashmir, the Jammu Railway Division is set to **flag off its first Cherry Cargo Train**.

Key Points

- **About the Cherry Cargo Train:**
 - It has been launched by the **Northern Railway, Jammu Division**, to create a reliable rail-based transportation channel for perishable agricultural goods.
 - It is designed specifically to facilitate the shipment of **cherries** and similar produce to markets outside J&K.
- **Logistics and Route:**
 - The cargo will be transported from **Katra Railway Station in Jammu and Kashmir** to **Bandra Railway Station in Mumbai**.
 - A Parcel Van (VP) will be attached to a regular goods train for this purpose.
 - VP is a request for the allocation of a full parcel van for the shipment of goods.
 - The journey is expected to take **30 hours**, significantly reducing transit time compared to traditional road transport.
- **Stakeholders and Planning:**
 - This effort was finalized after **extensive consultations** between the **Northern Railway**, the **Horticulture Department of J&K**, and various **fruit grower associations**.

Significance and Benefits of the Initiative

- **Benefits for Fruit Growers:**
 - The use of rail transport ensures that **perishable produce like cherries reaches markets faster**, thereby reducing the chances of spoilage and maintaining quality.
 - It provides a **cost-effective alternative** to road transportation, benefiting small and medium-scale growers economically.
- **Impact on the Region:**
 - The initiative is expected to **boost the economy of J&K** by enhancing the market reach of its agricultural products.
 - It will also help **reduce road traffic congestion and environmental pollution**, making it a sustainable option for future freight movement.
 - If successful, this model could be replicated for other produce such as **apples, pears, and plums**, expanding its benefits further.

Kashmir's Cherry

- **Cherry is a crucial early-season fruit crop** in Kashmir, typically harvested during **May and June**.
- **J&K contributes approximately 95%** of India's total cherry production, making it the **leading producer** in the country.
- **Five main cherry varieties grown in Kashmir include:**

- **Mishri** – the sweetest and most expensive.
- **Double cherry** – widely cultivated for canning, juice, and jam.
- **Makhmali, Black (Gol), and Awal Number** – locally popular.
- Cherry farming is an **important source of mid-year income** for fruit growers, especially before the apple harvest season.
- The crop is **extremely sensitive to weather conditions**, especially:
 - **Heavy rainfall** – which causes the fruit to crack and rot.
 - **Hailstorms and temperature drops** – which disrupt harvesting and reduce shelf life.



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