Janakpur-Ayodhya Weekly Train: 604-km Sita-Ram Rail Link

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15 November 2026: The Ministry of Railways announced that Indian Railways will run a new weekly train service between Janakpur Dham in Nepal and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The initiative links two places associated with the Ramayana tradition - Janakpur Dham, the birthplace of Mata Sita, and Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram.

The service: key facts

Route and distance: about 604 kilometres, from Janakpur Dham to Ayodhya Cantt via towns in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Stoppages: Jaynagar, Madhubani, Shisho, Sitamarhi, Raxaul, Narkatiaganj, Gorakhpur, Basti, Mankapur and Ayodhya Dham, besides the terminal stations.

Frequency: once a week - departure on Saturday from Janakpur Dham and Monday from Ayodhya Cantt.

Bilateral rail cooperation: the context

June 2026 talks: India and Nepal have held discussions on cross-border railway links, including passenger services on the Janakpur-Ayodhya section.

Ministry's statement: "India and Nepal share centuries-old cultural, historical and social bonds... The new train service will add another dimension to bilateral cooperation by using railway connectivity to bring communities closer."

Background: the first broad-gauge cross-border passenger link between India and Nepal - the Jaynagar (India)-Kurtha/Janakpur (Nepal) section - has been operational since 2022; the new

service extends this corridor.

For the exam

Questions can be asked on the route (Janakpur-Ayodhya), distance (604 km), major stoppages, frequency (weekly) and India-Nepal rail links (the Jaynagar-Kurtha link); the cultural-diplomacy angle is also examinable.

Quiz: Test your knowledge

Q1: Consider the following about the Janakpur Dham-Ayodhya weekly train: 1. Its route is about 604 kilometres. 2. It will pass through Jaynagar, Sitamarhi and Gorakhpur. 3. It will be a daily service. How many are correct?

(a) Only one(b) Only two(c) All three(d) None

Answer and explanation: (b) Statements 1 and 2 are correct. Statement 3 is wrong - it is a weekly service: Saturday from Janakpur, Monday from Ayodhya.

Q2: Which cultural tradition did the Railways Ministry cite for linking Janakpur Dham and Ayodhya?

(a) The Buddhist pilgrimage circuit(b) The Ramayana tradition - the birthplaces of Sita and Ram(c) The Sufi pilgrimage circuit(d) The Mahaparinirvana trail of Buddha

Answer and explanation: (b) Janakpur is Mata Sita's and Ayodhya Lord Ram's birthplace - the ministry cited these two centres of the Ramayana tradition.

Mains Practice Question

Cross-border rail links are becoming instruments of culture-based diplomacy under 'Neighbourhood First'. Comment in the context of the Janakpur-Ayodhya train. (Answer in 250 words - 15 marks)

Answer outline:

Introduction: The context - the announcement of the Janakpur-Ayodhya weekly service.

Main body: Cultural-religious ties - the Ramayana tradition, the Ramayana Circuit; the economic dimension - tourism, border trade; the strategic dimension - balancing influence through connectivity; challenges - last-mile ratios, border procedures, political ups and downs.

Conclusion: Connectivity projects built on shared cultural heritage give bilateral relations a durable foundation.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

In short: Indian Railways will run a weekly train of about 604 km between Janakpur Dham (Nepal) and Ayodhya - Saturday from Janakpur, Monday from Ayodhya; stoppages include Jaynagar, Sitamarhi, Raxaul and Gorakhpur.

Question: At which stations will the train halt?

Jaynagar, Madhubani, Shisho, Sitamarhi, Raxaul, Narkatiaganj, Gorakhpur, Basti, Mankapur and Ayodhya Dham, besides the terminals Janakpur Dham and Ayodhya Cantt.

Question: What was the first India-Nepal cross-border passenger rail link?

The Jaynagar (Bihar)-Kurtha/Janakpur (Nepal) broad-gauge section, operational since 2022.

Question: When does the service start?

The Railways Ministry announced the service on 14 November 2026; it will run weekly - Saturday from Janakpur and Monday from Ayodhya.

Sources:

- The Hindu: Indian Railways to connect Janakpur Dham with Ayodhya, 14 November 2026
- PIB: Janakpur-Ayodhya weekly train service announced

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