



Barabanki to Bahraich Highway to Become Key Cross-Border Trade Lifeline

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India and Nepal share one of South Asia's most active land-based trade relationships. India is Nepal's largest trading partner, **accounting for more than 60% of Nepal's total trade volume**, reflecting the deep economic interdependence between the two nations.

The Union Cabinet's approval for the construction of the **4-lane access-controlled Barabanki–Bahraich section of National Highway-927** is set to play a transformative role in strengthening trade ties between India and Nepal. By improving connectivity to the strategically important Rupaidiha Land Port and the nearby Nepalgunj, the project is expected to boost cross-border commerce, support regional livelihoods, and enhance economic cooperation between the two neighbouring countries. Among the various border points, the Rupaidiha–Nepalgunj route plays a vital role. This border alone handles the majority of exports from India to Nepal. With the new NH-927 providing faster and more reliable connectivity, trade through this route is expected to grow significantly in the coming years.

Supporting Food and Agricultural Trade Between Two Nations

One of the most important aspects of India–Nepal trade through this corridor is the movement of agricultural and food products. Trucks carrying rice, wheat, vegetables, dairy products, and livestock feed regularly move from Indian markets into Nepal, ensuring consistent supply of daily essentials. This highway project is expected to significantly reduce transportation time by nearly **50%, cutting travel duration between Barabanki and Bahraich from about 150 minutes to 75 minutes**, while increasing vehicle speeds from **40 kmph to 80 kmph**. Faster travel will reduce spoilage of perishable goods such as vegetables and dairy products, directly benefiting farmers and traders on both sides of the border. Improved connectivity will also help farmers in districts across eastern Uttar Pradesh access larger markets in Nepal, potentially increasing incomes and reducing post-harvest losses.

Ensuring Reliable Supply of Essential Goods

Beyond agricultural products, the corridor supports the movement of essential supplies such as medicines and consumer goods. These items are critical for Nepal's economy and daily life, and uninterrupted transport routes are essential to maintaining steady supply chains. Past disruptions at the border have shown the importance of smooth transport infrastructure. At times when trade movement slowed, hundreds of trucks carrying vegetables, fuel, and other goods were stranded, leading to daily losses of crores and affecting both traders and consumers. With a modern access-controlled highway, such delays are expected to reduce significantly, ensuring faster movement of goods and lowering transport costs.

Boosting Logistics Growth

The improved road network will complement the development of logistics facilities at Rupaidiha, where daily truck movement is projected to increase significantly, indicating strong growth potential in cross-border trade volumes. This increased movement will create opportunities for warehousing, transport

services, and logistics businesses along the corridor.

Transforming Lives in Border Communities

Perhaps the most significant impact of the Barabanki–Bahraich highway will be felt by people living in border districts such as Bahraich district and surrounding regions. Border markets in towns near Rupaidiha rely heavily on cross-border customers, with some local businesses reporting that **majority of their sales depend on Nepali buyers**.

Improved highway connectivity is expected to bring:

- More business opportunities for traders
- Increased employment in transport and logistics
- Growth in hotels, eateries, and small retail outlets
- Better access to healthcare, education, and markets

For truck drivers, farmers, and small traders, faster roads translate into higher earnings, reduced costs, and more reliable income opportunities.

GDH/DS

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