

Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade

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Source: *Indian Waterways Authority of India*



In line with Government's focus on improving connectivity to the North Eastern Region (NER), a landmark container cargo consignment will sail on inland waterways from Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) to the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) terminal at Pandu in Guwahati. The 12-15 days voyage will be an integrated IWT movement via National Waterway-1 (River Ganga), NW-97 (Sunderbans), Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route and NW-2 (river Brahmaputra). **This is the first-ever containerized cargo movement on this Inland Water Transport (IWT) route.**

About Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade

There is a Protocol (agreement) between India & Bangladesh, **under which vessels of either country can travel through specified river routes in the other country.** Inland Water Transit and Trade between India and Bangladesh. **There are four specific river routes and 5 ports of call in each country designated under the Protocol. The present Protocol is valid up to March 2020** with a clause for automatic renewal thereafter. These are as follows: –

- Kolkata – Haldia – Raimongal – Chalna – Khulna – Mongla – Kaukhali-Barisal – Hizla – Chandpur – Narayanganj – Aricha – Sirajganj – Bahadurabad – Chilmari – Dhubri – Pandu- Silghat; and vice versa (Total one-way length: 1720 Km)
- Kolkata – Haldia – Raimongal – Mongla – Kaukhali – Barisal – Hizla – Chandpur – Narayanganj – Bhairab Bazar

- Ajmiriganj – Markuli – Sherpur – Fenchuganj – Zakiganj
- Karimganj; and vice versa (Total one-way length: 1318 Km)
- Rajshahi – Godagari – Dhulian; and vice versa (Total one-way length: 78 Km)
- Karimganj – Zakiganj – Fenchuganj – Sherpur – Markuli – Ajmiriganj – Bhairab Bazar – Narayanganj – Chandpur – Aricha – Siraganj – Bahadurabad – Chilmari – Dhubri – Pandu- Silghat; vice versa (Total one-way length: 1416 Km)

The five ports of call in each country are as follows:

S. No.	India	Bangladesh
1	Kolkata	Narayanganj
2	Haldia	Khulna
3	Karimganj	Mongla
4	Pandu	Mongla
5	Silghat	Ashuganj

Transportation of cargo through the IBP route has been taking place regularly for many-many years. However, transportation of Indian transit cargo on these protocol routes reduced in the last 40-15 years primarily due to less depth available in Sirajganj – Daikhowa & Ashuganj – Zakiganj stretch of Indo Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) during non-monsoon months. Considering this, the Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh have recently agreed to undertake dredging work in these stretches (with 80% funding for Govt. of India). This initiative is expected to substantially enhance cargo movement by IWT mode between Haldia & Kolkata ports and Guwahati/Silchar and other locations along Brahmaputra and Barak rivers in Assam.