

Freight trains resume on Haldibari-Chilahati route after 56 years

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Bangladesh and India resumed freight train operations on Haldibari-Chilahati route on August 1 after 56 years.

Indian Railways dispatched the first freight train loaded with stones from Damdim Station of Northeast Frontier Railway to Bangladesh on August 1, said the Indian high commission in Dhaka.

After the partition in 1947, seven rail links were operational between India and the then East Pakistan till 1965 and the Haldibari-Chilahati rail link is one those routes.

Apart from the Haldibari-Chilahati rail link, currently, there are four operational rail links between India and Bangladesh-Petrapole - (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh), Gede (India) - Darshana (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India) - Rohanpur (Bangladesh) and Radhikapur (India) - Birol (Bangladesh).

The leaderships of both India and Bangladesh are committed to revive all the pre-1965 railway links between the two countries, added the Indian mission in Dhaka.

For this purpose, the restoration work was undertaken by the railways of both the countries to revive this rail link.

After the restoration, the Haldibari-Chilahati rail link was inaugurated in December 2020 through a virtual meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and India's

counterpart Narendra Modi to boost trade between the two neighbouring countries.

The Indian high commission in Dhaka said the restored rail link will strengthen India-Bangladesh Rail Connectivity and bilateral trade.

It will also enhance rail network accessibility to the main ports and dry ports to support the growth in regional trade and to encourage economic and social development of the region, it added.

The commodities that can be exported from India to Bangladesh through this rail route include stones and boulders, food grain, fresh fruits, chemical fertiliser, onion, chilies, garlic, ginger, fly ash, clay, lime stone, wood and timber.

From Bangladesh to India, all exportable commodities are permitted, said the Indian mission.