

India launches cargo vessel on Bihar-Assam route through BD's Jamuna

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 06 February, 2022



Dhaka: India on February 5 launched a river vessel to carry cargo on a pilot basis from its western part Bihar to the north-eastern region Assam through Jamuna River in Bangladesh.

India's Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal as well as Food and Public Distribution Minister Piyush Goyal jointly flagged off the cargo vessel MV Lal Bahadur Shastri carrying 200 MT of food grains from Patna Port in Bihar on the Ganges River for the Pandu Port on the Brahmaputra River in Assam of India, Inland Waterways Authority of India said in a tweet on February 5.

The vessel would cover a first of its kind voyage through a 2,350 km route, passing through Bhagalpur, Manihari, Sahibganj, Farakka, Tribeni, Kolkata, Haldia, Hemnagar (all in India), and Khulna, Narayanganj, Sirajganj, Chilmari (in Bangladesh), and Dhubri and Jogighopa (in India) under Protocol for Inland Water Trade and Transit.

"Today heralds a historic moment, as we enter a new era of cargo movement to the north-east, connecting the Ganga to the Brahmaputra," said Sarbananda Sonowal while launching the vessel.

The cargo might require 25 to 30 days to reach the Pandu Port in India.

Bangladesh state minister for shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury also virtually joined the function from Dhaka. “We have emphasised on the transfer of goods from Bangladesh to Bhutan and Nepal too, through India, as a part of steps to increase growth in national, regional and global economies,” he said.

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar described, the transfer of the consignment as a ‘milestone waterway journey’ and another reflection of strong India-Bangladesh friendship. Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed between Bangladesh and India in February 1972.

World Bank country chief in India Junaid Kamal Ahmad expressed his satisfaction over the launch of the transfer of food grains using the Ganges and Brahmaputra river routes through Bangladesh river networks.

“Indo-Bangladesh protocol is connecting Ganges and Brahmaputra. River connectivity is redefining opportunities for millions from Nepal to Bangladesh through India. Thanks to our rivers the future belongs to regional cooperation in SAR [South Asia region],” he said.

- T