

## **Development of Sirajganj-Dhaikawa River Stretch in Bangladesh**

In a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today the Minister of State for Shipping and Road Transport and Highways, Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya informed that a Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) between the Government of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh exists under which vessels of either country can ply in the identified waterways of both the countries. The Protocol was last renewed on 06th June, 2015 with a provision for automatic renewal for successive five years.

Indian and Bangladesh have signed an MOU on 08th April, 2017 wherein it has been decided that the Ashuganj – Zakiganj stretch (309 km) of Kushiyara river and Sirajganj – Daikhowa stretch (146 km) of Jamuna river in the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route will be developed for round the year navigation and the costs will be shared in the ratio of 80:20 between India and Bangladesh respectively.

The development for round the year navigation of Sirajganj – Daikhowa stretch on the Indo – Bangladesh Protocol route in Bangladesh has the potential to facilitate critical connectivity between National Waterway-1 (River Ganga) and National Waterway-2 (River Brahmaputra) and enable movement of larger vessels from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh to Sadiya in Assam via Bangladesh.

The Jal Marg Vikas Project envisages capacity augmentation of National Waterway-1 (NW-1) from Haldia to Varanasi with technical and financial assistance of the World Bank at an estimated cost of Rs.5,369 crore.

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