

UPSC Preparation

Indo Bangladesh Protocol

Indo Bangladesh Protocol is an Inland water transit and trade protocol that exists between India and Bangladesh under which inland vessels of one country can transit through the specified routes of the other country.

Latest context: Brahmaputra (NW2) gets connected with Ganga (NW1) via Indo Bangladesh Protocol Route; Cargo ship carrying foodgrains from Patna docks at Pandu IWAI is planning to run a fixed schedule sailing between NW1 and NW2 heralding a new age of inland water transport for Assam & Northeast India.

Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade

- India and Bangladesh have a protocol on Transit and Trade through inland waterways to use waterways for commerce between the two countries and for passage of goods between two places in one country and to third countries through the territory of the other under the terms mutually agreed upon.
- This Protocol was first signed in 1972.
- It was last renewed in the year 2015 for a period of five years with a provision for its automatic renewal for a further duration of five years providing long term assurance to various stakeholders
- The existing protocol routes are
 - Kolkata-Pandu-Kolkata,
 - Kolkata-Karimganj - Kolkata,
 - Rajshahi-Dhulian-Rajshahi
 - Pandu-Karimganj-Pandu.
- For inter-country trade, ports of call have been designated in each country. These Ports of call generally act as intermediate stops for a ship on its scheduled journey for unloading and loading of cargo or taking on supplies or fuel and maintenance and refurbishing. They are

India	Bangladesh
Haldia	Narayanganj
Kolkata	Khulna
Pandu	Mongla
Karimganj	Sirajganj
Silghat	Ashuganj
Dhubari	Pangaon

- Under the Protocol, 50:50 cargo sharing by Indian and Bangladeshi vessels is permitted both for transit and inter-country trade.
- Jogigopha in India and Bahadurabad in Bangladesh are added as new ports of call. They provide connectivity to Meghalaya, Assam and Bhutan.

Significance of Indo-Bangladesh Protocol

- The trade between India and Bangladesh will improve with the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade.
- It promotes better connectivity with other neighbouring countries.
- According to a PTI report, the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route will use NW-1 as well as NW-2 on the Indian side. This waterway will connect landlocked countries such as Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar to smoothen trade in the coming days.
- It has been envisioned that the Northeast will slowly turn & convert into a connectivity hub.
- Sirajganj-Daikhowa and Ashuganj-Zakiganj stretches are also being developed at a cost of Rs. 305.84 crore on an 80:20 share basis to improve navigability. In this project, 80% cost is being borne by India and 20% by Bangladesh
- The development of these stretches is expected to provide seamless navigation to North Eastern Region via the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route.