

## MONTHLY UPDATES ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS OF INDIA

UPDATE-14  
October 2019

This update covers the following:

- [Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route: Standard Operating Procedures concluded for the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports](#)
- [Study reveals severe impacts on Gangetic Dolphins due to river traffic on National Waterway-1](#)
- [Halting of Ro-Ro services in Kerala](#)
- [Vessels collide in Dolphin Key Breeding Zone](#)

### 1. Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route: Standard Operating Procedures concluded for the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports

India- Bangladesh Joint Statement was released on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 during official visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India. Among other matters discussed in the statement, it was mentioned that both sides recognized that increasing connectivity through air, water, rail, and road offers mutually beneficial opportunity for enhancing economic cooperation between Bangladesh and the North Eastern States of India and beyond. The Leaders welcomed the conclusion of Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Chattogram and Mongla ports for movement of goods to and from India, particularly to and from the North East of India, which could create a win-win situation for both economies. (Source: [Ministry of External Affairs](#))



Source: [PMINDIA](#)

Both leaders underlined the immense potential of movement of cargo using the inland water and coastal shipping trade. Towards this, they welcomed the decision to operationalize the Dhulian-Gadagari-Rajshahi- Daulatdia-Aricha Route (to and fro) and include Daudkandi-Sonamura Route (to and fro) under Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade. Source: [PIB release, Prime Minister's Office, 5 October 2019](#)

## **2. Study reveals severe impacts on Gangetic Dolphins river traffic due to National Waterway-1**

Recent Study by Mayukh Dey et al. (2019) shows that Gangetic Dolphins will get seriously affected from noise pollution due to movement of vessels on National Waterway-1. According to this study, *“Underwater noise from vessels can negatively affect endangered Ganges river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*), which are ‘almost blind’ and rely entirely on high-frequency echolocation clicks to sense their environment,”* The study relies on field-based acoustic recordings and modelling to assess acoustic responses of Gangetic Dolphins to underwater noise exposure from vessels in the Ganga River. The study concludes that, *“Dolphins showed enhanced activity during acute noise exposure and suppressed activity during chronic exposure. Increase in ambient noise levels altered dolphin acoustic responses, strongly masked echolocation clicks, and more than doubled metabolic stress. Noise impacts were further aggravated during dry-season river depth reduction.”*



Source: [Sanctuary Asia](#)

In terms of the population distribution of the Gangetic Dolphins in Indian rivers, [Nachiket Kelkar](#) has stated that over 90 percent of the Gangetic Dolphin population distribution overlaps with the extent of the proposed waterways. This list includes NW-1 (Ganga), NW-2 (Brahmaputra), NW-97 (Sundarban), NW-16 (Barak), NW-40 (Ghaghara), NW-37 (Gandak), NW-58 (Kosi), NW- 24 (Chambal), NW-17 (Beas) and NW-65 (Mahananda). Development work has been prioritised and possibly ongoing in all of these waterways except those declared on Chambal, Beas and Mahanada.

## **3. Halting of Ro-Ro services in Kerala**

“The Cochin Port Trust (CPT) is in a quandary, with it being directed to pay ₹58 lakh as compensation to Lots Shipping, following an arbitration process, for terminating the roll-on roll-off (Ro-ro) vessel that transported container-laden lorries between Willingdon Island and Bolghatty Island.”



Source: [The Hindu](#)

The vessel used to operate on a stretch of National Waterway-3 in Kerala. Sources mentioned in the news report below alleged that the Cochin Port Trust could not provide minimum depth in the waterway to safeguard the vessels equipments from damage.

Read more here: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/halting-of-ro-ro-port-told-to-pay-58-lakh-compensation/article29599263.ece>

#### **4. Vessels collide in Dolphin Key Breeding Zone**

In October 2019, a tanker carrying 1200 tonnes of diesel collided with another ship on the Karnaphuli river near Chittagong port. This oil-spill took place in Southeast Bangladesh threatening the breeding ground of the critically endangered Gangetic Dolphin. A similar accident took place in the Karnaphuli – the key breeding ground of the dolphins in 2016. Read more at

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/disaster-oil-spill-threatens-rare-bangladesh-dolphin-breeding-zone/71788685>