

Strategic Kolkata-Northeast Sea Route to Bypass Bangladesh

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Kolkata-Northeast Sea Route



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Kolkata-Northeast Sea Route Latest News

- India is planning a new highway from Shillong (Meghalaya) to Silchar (Assam) as part of a broader multi-modal transport project connecting to Myanmar, which will create a sea route to Kolkata that bypasses Bangladesh.
- This move is seen as a strategic response to Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, who recently claimed that Northeast India is "landlocked" and relies on Dhaka as its only ocean gateway.

- In response, PM Modi, during a meeting with Yunus at the BIMSTEC Summit, cautioned against divisive rhetoric.

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP)

- The KMTTP is a strategic infrastructure initiative undertaken by India, aimed at enhancing connectivity between the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata and the landlocked North-Eastern states via Myanmar, bypassing Bangladesh.
- The project is jointly developed by India and Myanmar and is a key component of India's Act East Policy.

Different Legs of the Project

- **Sea Leg**
 - From Kolkata Port (India) to Sittwe Port (Myanmar) via the Bay of Bengal.
 - Distance: ~539 km by sea.
 - Sittwe Port has been constructed by India.
- **Inland Waterway Leg**
 - From Sittwe to Paletwa via the Kaladan River in Myanmar.
 - Distance: ~158 km.
- **Road Leg**
 - From Paletwa to Zorinpui (on the India-Myanmar border in Mizoram).
 - Distance: ~110 km.
- **Indian Leg (Planned Extension)**
 - From Zorinpui to Lawngtlai, and further to Aizawl in Mizoram.
 - To be connected to India's highway network.

Benefits

- **Bypasses Bangladesh:** Reduces dependency on access through Bangladesh for North-East connectivity.
- **Improves Connectivity:** Offers an alternative route to the Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck), the narrow strip that connects North-East India with the rest of the country.
- **Boosts Trade & Commerce:** Enhances trade flow between India and South-East Asia.
- **Strategic Significance:** Strengthens India's presence in the Bay of Bengal and deepens ties with Myanmar.
- **Economic Development:** Spurs infrastructure development and economic activities in India's underdeveloped North-Eastern region.
- **Part of Act East Policy:** A critical step in India's efforts to improve connectivity with ASEAN countries.

Strategic Highway to Transform North-East Connectivity



- A 166.8-km four-lane high-speed highway is being constructed from Mawlyngkhung (near Shillong) to Panchgram (near Silchar) along NH-6.
- It is the first high-speed corridor in the North-East and the first such project in a hilly region, to be completed by 2030.
- The project is implemented by NHIDCL for MoRTH and was approved by the Union Cabinet at a cost of Rs 22,864 crore.

Infrastructure Details

- The project will be executed in **Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)** under the PPP model.
 - HAM is a project delivery model used in India, particularly for national highway development.
 - It combines elements of both the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) and the Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) models.
 - It involves the government providing a portion of the project cost (40%) as construction support, while the remaining 60% is financed by the private developer through a pre-fixed annuity payment.
 - This model aims to reduce financial risk for developers and speed up project execution.
- It will feature:

- 19 major bridges, 153 minor bridges, 326 culverts
- 22 underpasses, 26 overpasses, 8 limited-height subways
- 34 viaducts to navigate the hilly terrain.

Key National and Strategic Significance

- The highway will reduce travel time between Shillong and Silchar from **8.5 hours to 5 hours**.
- It will connect Silchar — a key entry point to **Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur**, and the **Barak Valley** — and act as a major regional link.
- It supports **India's Act East Policy** by enhancing connectivity to Myanmar and beyond.
- The project is expected to **reduce dependence on the Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck)** and **bypass Bangladesh**, offering an alternative route via **the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project**.

Kolkata-Northeast Sea Route FAQs

Q1. What is the Kaladan Project?

Ans. It's an India-Myanmar project linking Kolkata to the Northeast via sea, river, and road, bypassing Bangladesh.

Q2. Why is this sea route important?

Ans. It offers Northeast India strategic, independent access to the sea, reducing reliance on Bangladesh's transit facilities.

Q3. What are the components of the Kaladan route?

Ans. Sea from Kolkata to Sittwe, river to Paletwa, road to Mizoram border, then Indian highway extension.

Q4. What's unique about the Shillong-Silchar highway?

Ans. It's the Northeast's first high-speed corridor, reducing travel time from 8.5 hours to 5 hours.

Q5. How does this route support Act East Policy?

Ans. It strengthens India's connectivity to Southeast Asia, improves trade flow, and boosts Northeast's development.

Source: [IE](#) | [TW](#)

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