

## UNIFORCE BANGLADESH DROVE 1500 KM TO INDIA

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**BANGLADESH** – For the first time in the history of international trade in the Indian subcontinent, a cargo truck that departed from Expo Freight (EFL)'s Tongi warehouse in Bangladesh on August 27<sup>th</sup> was allowed to proceed to India after clearing customs at the Benapole-Petrapole border. Carrying cargo for EFL's clients Marks & Spencer London, the truck then continued to travel for more than 1500 km before reaching its final destination in Alipur, Delhi on 5<sup>th</sup> September.

Orchestrated by the Bangladesh and India offices of Expo Freight Private Limited (EFL), in partnership with Nazrul Transport of Bangladesh, this first time trial run of a cargo truck from Bangladesh to India was made possible by the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement signed in 2015 by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. The agreement has paved the way for the easier passage of trucks between the four countries as it no longer requires the trans-shipment of cargo from one country's truck to another.

According to industry expert Vijay Kondath, the BBIN trial run stands to have a huge impact on the future of logistics and trade, not just between the BBIN countries, but also globally. "Port congestion, lengthy transit times, warehousing costs and processing times at the border will be alleviated as logistics companies take advantage of this agreement and provide speedier services to clients."

Companies with freight needs in the Indian subcontinent can now avail themselves of greater transportation options as the BBIN agreement has made motor freight more efficient and economically competitive against air and sea freight. According to a press release by officials at the signing of the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement, the transformation of transport corridors into economic corridors could potentially increase intraregional trade within South Asia by almost 60% and with the rest of the world by over 30%.

At a press conference held in Delhi on September 5<sup>th</sup>, Zahid-Ul-Islam, Counsellor of the Bangladesh High Commission, lauded this milestone achievement, which he said "will help in increasing trade between Bangladesh and India. It also shows that trust exists between the two countries."

Chief Commissioner of Customs (India) Vivek Johri said, "It is a very big occasion that marks the ease of doing business. The entry of Bangladesh's cargo vehicles to India and ours to their territory will help reduce transaction costs."

CEO of EFL Group and Managing Director of India, S. Senthilnathan said, "EFL's Bangladesh and India offices have worked in conjunction with the respective authorities in both countries to achieve this momentous feat. The BBIN agreement enables freight forwarders like EFL to provide more efficient services to our clients, making the region more attractive for business investment. It is great to see that the BBIN countries are making great strides in encouraging regional cooperation."

The BBIN framework provides for greater regional integration between the four signatory countries, enhancing the possibilities for mutual cooperation and greater cultural and economic exchange.

Motiur Islam and Mohammed Rasel departed from Expo Freight (EFL)'s Tongi warehouse in Bangladesh on August 27<sup>th</sup> 2016. For Islam and Rasel, the two men who drove the truck from Bangladesh to Delhi, this trip marks their first time in India. "It is a proud moment for us. I enjoyed driving on the Indian roads," said a beaming Rasel.

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