

NadiSutra: Update 2 - Half way mark reached

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The 45-day journey hits the 42-day mark but the father-son team are only at Patna. What has happened along the way, and what's in store next?

Our planned 2000 km-long canoe ride has brought us half way, to the old great river-port of Patna. We've journeyed down the Mahakali-Sharda down to its confluence with the Karnali-Ghaghra, and from there to down beyond the great confluences with the Ganga and the Sone, and are at the confluence with the Gandak river. It has been 42 days on the river already as I sit down to write this update, and it has been one terrific ride. Our gross estimate while planning was that we would take about 45 days to complete our entire journey to the sea, but we are only about half-way yet.

Two big reasons for this:

1. We **greatly underestimated the distance to be traveled**. Because of low water conditions due to serious abstraction of water from three consecutive barrages, the flow has dropped drastically, leading to numerous braids and meanders. We must constantly zig-zag to stay with faster currents and deep-enough water, increasing the travel distance greatly.
2. We find ourselves **hampered by thick fog on the river** most mornings at this time of year. Some days, the fog doesn't lift until the afternoon, and on a few days, not at all, so we get fewer hours of paddling than we planned for. Water merges with the fog into an infinite blank in such conditions. We must be able to see far enough to be able to choose between approaching braided channels, and also see currents of submerged trees that could rip the rubber skin of our kayak.

On average we have got about 4 to 6 hours of paddling until sundown, every day. These conditions have determined our speed of movement along the river, and we know better now.