

MONTHLY UPDATES ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS OF INDIA

UPDATE-1 DEVELOPMENTS IN SEPTEMBER 2018



(Google Earth Image showing the proposed 111 waterways in India, Map prepared by Manthan Adhyayan Kendra)

Background

In March 2016, India declared 111 rivers, creeks, canals and estuaries or their stretches as national inland waterways with the implementation of [National Waterways Act, 2016](#). The passage of this legislation enables the Central Government to regulate these waterways for development with regard to shipping, navigation and transport through mechanically propelled vessels. Prior to this, five national waterways were declared, oldest of them being the National Waterway (NW)-1 which was declared in 1982 on Ganga-Bhagirathi- Hooghly river systems.

The currently operational/navigable inland waterways of the country are listed in [Table 1](#) below. Some of these were operational as waterways before 2016 and are now being proposed to be converted to “national” waterways. (For example, NW-10 in Amba river).

[Inland Waterways Authority of India \(IWAI\)](#), the statutory body responsible for regulation and development of inland waterways, has prioritised the development of 37 waterways by 2019. Out of these, work on 13 is in an advanced stage and these are listed in [Table 2](#).

National waterways are being developed with the claims that these provide environmental friendly, cost-effective and safe and sustainable mode of transport for bulk and hazardous goods. However, the '[Strategic Status Report on National Inland Waterways of India](#)' by Manthan Adhyayan Kendra shows that these claims are not universally valid or automatic. Waterways are not always environment friendly or cost-effective. The environmental and social impacts due to these waterways are manifold, and require robust and comprehensive studies, which are often lacking. Moreover, waterways are also being kept out of the ambit of the statutory environmental clearance.

Since work on various inland waterways is being pushed with great speed in different parts of the country, [Manthan](#) has decided to compile, on a monthly basis, major news updates from various media reports, Press Information Bureau (PIB) releases and other sources like RTI. The intention is to make people more informed

and involved in this massive intervention in the Indian rivers. Your support, comments and feedbacks will be helpful in enriching our ongoing analysis on waterways.

Table 1: Operational National Inland Waterways of India

S.No.	National Waterway Number	River of River Stretch	Length (km)	States
1.	NW-1	Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (Haldia-Allahabad)	1620	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal
2.	NW-2	Brahmaputra River (Dhubri-Sadiya)	891	Assam
3.	NW 3	West Coast Canal (Kottapuram-Kollam), Champakara and Udyogmandal Canals	205	Kerala
4.	NW-4	Phase-I: Vijaywada to Muktyala	82	Andhra Pradesh
5.	NW-10	Amba river	45	Maharashtra
6.	NW-85	Revadanda Creek-Kundalika river system	31	Maharashtra
7.	NW-27	Cumberjua river- Confluence with Zuari to Confluence with Mandovi river	17	Goa
8.	NW-68	Mandovi river -Usgaon Bridge to Arabian Sea	41	Goa
9.	NW-111	Zuari river – Sanvordem Bridge to Marmugaon Port	50	Goa
10.	NW-9	Alappuzha-Kottayam-Athirampuzha Canal – Boat jetty, Alappuzha to Athirampuzha	38	Kerala
11.	NW-100	Tapi river, Sea mouth to Magdala Port	15	Gujarat
12.	NW-97	Sunderbans Waterways (through Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route)	201	West Bengal

(Source: [PIB release](#), 30th July, 2018)

Table 2: Waterways Where Development is in an Advanced Stage

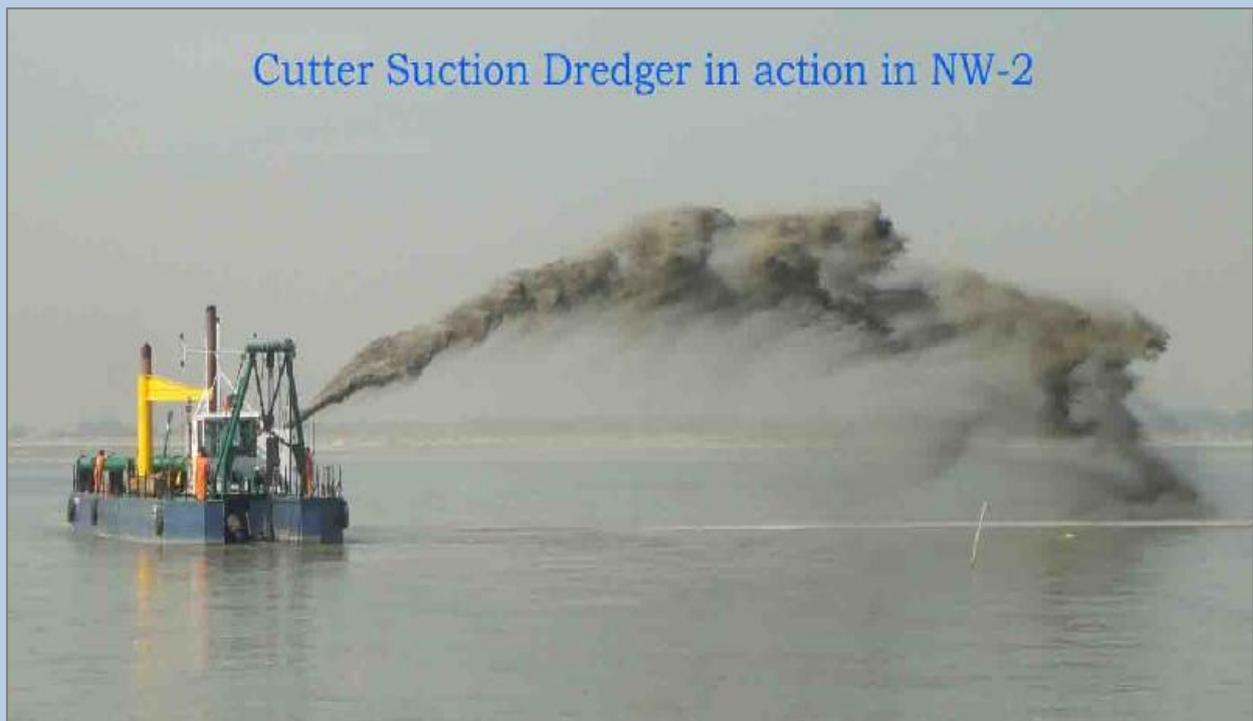
National Waterway (NW)	River or River/ Canal Stretches
NW-1	Ganga
NW-2	Brahmaputra
NW-3	West Coast Canal (Kottapuram-Kollam), Champakara and Udyogmandal Canals
NW-4	Kakinada-Puducherry, Nashik-Bhadrachalam-Rajahmundry Stretch of River Godavari and Galagali-Wazirabad-Vijayawada Stretch of River Krishna
NW-5	Talcher-Dhamra Stretch of Brahmani, -Kharsua- Tantighai-PanduaNala-DudheiNala-Kani Dhamra-river system, Geonkhali-Charbatia Stretch of East Coast Canal, Charbatia-Dhamra Stretch of Matai River and Mahanadi Delta Rivers
NW-16	Barak
NW-37	Gandak
NW-40	Ghaghra
NW-58	Kosi
NW-97	Sundarbans
NW-68	Mandovi
NW-111	Zuari
NW-27	Cumbarjua

Important Developments in National Inland Waterways

September 2018

In this update

- [Developments related to National Waterway-1 \(Ganga Waterway\)](#)
- [Development on the extension of Waterways into Nepal](#)
- [Land Acquisition for National Waterway-3 in Kerala](#)
- [Soft loan of 91 Crores sought by Goa Barge Association](#)
- [Vessels carrying fly-ash on NW-1, 2 and Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route: Longest IWT haul in India, fisherpeople angry as barges cut nets](#)



(Source: [Photo Gallery, IWAI](#))

This first monthly update is a little longer because it has above background and context for the national waterways. Subsequent updates will be more concise.

1. National Waterway-1 (Ganga-Bhagirathi- Hooghly River Systems)

Background

Also known as Jal Marg Vikas Project and the oldest national waterway of India, NW-1 is a 1620 km long waterway proposed from Haldia to Allahabad. This project is being developed with financial and technical assistance from the World Bank. IWAI releases an detailed monthly update for this waterway, along with some of the major developments on other primary national waterways (NW-1 to5). These updates can be accessed from <http://iwai.nic.in/showfile.php?lid=793>.

Major News Updates

1. *IWAI released 15 standardised vessel design concepts for NW-1*

15 [Standardised Vessel Designs](#) concepts for NW-1 were made public by the IWAI. The Press Information release by Ministry of Shipping on this occasion states that, “This marks attaining of a critical milestone in the growth of the country’s Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector as it will help overcome the unique navigation challenges river Ganga throws due to its complex river morphology, hydraulics, acute bends, shifting channels, meanders and current.” ([PIB release](#), 31st August 2018)

2. *Dredging in Ganga to be monitored by CCTV Cameras*

“IWAI will monitor upcoming dredging work in Ganga by getting 24 by 7 live feed through CCTV cameras from different locations. This will be done to avoid frequent visits of officials to multiple sites including in remote areas and to stop contractors from making false claims.”

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/dredging-of-ganga-at-different-locations-to-be-monitored-via-cctv-live-feeds/articleshow/65692612.cms>

3. *Survey started by IWAI for dredging of Ganga bed silt deposits*

“Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has started a survey on silt deposits in the Ganga basin from Pirpainti to Munger.” The sources pointed out that, “..Approximately 30-35ft high silt deposits on the riverbed reduce the water retention capacity of the river and hence, more than 30-35 lakh cusec floodwater flows downstream. And this is the reason that during summer, the river dries up despite having sufficient water, as water could not be stored by the river, it flows away making the water level low.”

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/bihar/plan-to-dredge-out-ganga-bed-silt-deposits/cid/1669972>

4. *An Expert Committee by Central Government recommends removal of silt from 11 hotspots to solve Bihar’s silt crisis*

“For the first time, an expert committee, formed by India’s Central government, has identified 11 hot spots with alarming silt deposits, where silt should be removed to ensure the normal flow of the river and to minimise the chance of extreme floods. The report has been submitted to the central water resource department, and is not in the public domain as of yet.”

<https://www.firstpost.com/long-reads/in-flood-prone-bihar-expert-committee-warns-about3rrr-mounting-silt-crisis-5224331.html>

“ Increasing heavy silt deposits in the river Ganga also slow down the river flow in the dry season, posing a big challenge to India’s ambitious national waterway project, which aims to boost the use [inland water transport](#).” “.. The chief minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar, has repeatedly put pressure on the central government to deal with the issue over the past three years.”

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/expert-committee-sheds-light-on-bihar-s-mounting-silt-crisis-61668>

2. Extension of Waterways into Nepal through Kosi, Gandak and Ganga

Background

On 7th April 2018, the Prime ministers of India and Nepal issued a joint statement on the 'India- Nepal Statement on New Connectivity through Inland Waterways.' In this statement, it was declared that India will enhance the connectivity of Nepal to the sea through extending inland waterways into Nepal. National waterways proposed on Gandak (NW-37), Kosi (NW-58) through NW-1 are being considered for extension into Nepal.

A Preliminary report from Manthan – National and International Inland Waterways in Kosi and Gandak rivers explains the provisions, problems and potential of extending these waterways into Nepal.



(Proposed Kalughat Intermodal Terminal Site on Ganga (NW-1) near Patna. This terminal will be developed to handle container cargo, exclusively for Nepal. Photo: Manthan Adhyayan Kendra.)

Major News Updates

1. *Connectivity to Nepal through inland waterways*

“Several alternatives are under discussion between Nepal and India on the modality of the waterways, according to the officials. The Indian side has proposed that Nepal can export and import goods using big vessels from Kolkata to Kalughat in Bihar and park the goods there and transport them to Nepal border on smaller ships. Alternatively, Nepal can export or import goods by using the 180km Kalughat-Raxual road. The Indian side has also proposed transporting goods on big vessels through the Kolkata-Shaibgunj waterway and ferry them using small ships up to the Nepal border. Besides, Nepal can bring in goods by road using the 150km Shaibgunj-Manihari-Birgunj corridor. India has also proposed the use of cross-border railway lines which are under construction at various border points.”

<https://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-09-17/nepali-team-visits-india-to-study-inland-waterways.html>

2. *Feasibility reports for Kosi and Gandak Waterways to be completed in two months*

“The feasibility study for developing inland waterways from Indian sea ports to the Nepal border via Koshi and Narayani rivers will be completed within two months, officials have said. The feasibility report would lead to further study on the possibility of movement of cargo ships from Indian sea ports to the Nepal border via the two biggest rivers of Nepal – Narayani (Gandak in India) and Kosi.”

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-09-22/officials-feasibility-study-to-be-over-in-two-months.html>

3. Land Acquisition for Boat terminals for Waterways in Kerala

Background

Five National Inland Waterways (NW-3, 8, 9, 13, 59) have been proposed in Kerala through National Waterways Act, 2016. National Waterway-3 was earlier declared a NW through the National Waterway (Kollam-Kottapuram Stretch of West Coast Canal and Champakara and Udyogmandal Canals) Act, 1992.

Kerala has been raising concerns about the environmental and social impact of the waterways including the concerns about displacement. For more on this, Please see:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/national-waterways-will-only-serve-vested-interests-say-environmentalists/article24599835.ece>

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/unscientific-development-practices-a-bane/article24673321.ece>

Major News Update

1. Land Acquisition for boat terminals in Kerala

“The State government has given the administrative nod for acquiring land for the construction of three boat terminals along the 18.5-km stretch of the waterway being rejuvenated from Kovalam to Akkulam that includes the Parvathy Puthanar. The boat terminals are to come up in Kovalam, Akkulam and Vallakkadavu as part of the government’s ambitious ₹ 2,300-crore project to make the 633-km West Coast Canal (WCC), the main arterial waterway in the State, navigable.”

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/nod-for-land-to-set-up-boat-terminals/article25023056.ece>

4. Plea for soft loan of 91 Crore for repairing barges

Background

Six National Waterways have been proposed in Goa with the implementation of National Waterways Act, 2016. These include NW-27 (Cumberjua), NW-68 (Mandovi), NW-111 (Zuari), NW-25 (Chapora), NW-71 (Mapusa) and NW-88 (Sal). According to various official reports, Waterways on Mandovi, Zuari and Cumberjua are operational. Waterway on the Sal river was found non-viable after the techno-economic feasibility study conducted by IWAI.

Major News Update

1. Goa Barge Owners write to IWAI Chairman seeking soft loan of Rs 91 crores from IWAI to fund the repair of 141 barges.

“In a letter sent to IWAI chairman Nutan Guha-Biswas, the association said Goa’s barge industry was severely affected by the cessation of mining activity in the light of a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year.”

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/barge-owners-group-seeks-rs-91cr-soft-loan/articleshow/65986727.cms>

5. Vessels carrying fly-ash on NW-1, 2 and Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route: Longest IWT haul in India, fisherpeople angry as barges cut nets

Background

An Integrated National Waterways Transportation Grid (INTG) Study was undertaken by IWAI to link the

NW-1,2,3,4,5 and 6 to National/ State Highways, Railways (wherever feasible) and Sea Ports (wherever feasible) so that all these waterways become an integral part of the total transportation grid. Integrated movements of bulk goods like fly-ash and coal through NW-1(Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly) and NW-2 (Brahmaputra) through Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route (part of NW-97 on Sunderbans) have been initiated by the IWAI.



(IWAI vessel bound for Pandu Port (Guwahati, Assam) carrying 1233 tons of Fly-Ash from NTPC plant (Kahalgaon,Bihar), Source: Inland Waterways Authority of India [Facebook Page](#))

Major News Updates

1. *1233 tonnes of fly-ash transported through National waterways on Ganga, Brahmaputra and Sunderbans*

“Marking the commencement of a critical integrated movement through three Waterways, 1233 tonnes of fly ash – a by-product from National Thermal Power Corporation’s (NTPC) Kahalgaon power plant- was flagged off at Kahalgaon on NW-1, river Ganga for Pandu on NW -2, river Brahmaputra. Two barges of 1000 tonnes capacity each, belonging to Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will reach Pandu near Guwahati via the Indo Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route in nearly 20 days covering a distance of 2085 Kilometres.” ([PIB release](#), 30th August 2018)

2. *Barges from Kahalgaon, Bihar carrying fly-ash transported to Assam through inland waterways*

“Almost a month after setting sail from Kahalgaon in Bihar, two 1,000-tonne barges carrying 1,233 tonnes of bagged fly ash reached western Assam’s Dhubri via Bangladesh on Wednesday morning. The crossing over of the barges into India at Chilmari border in Dhubri district marked the beginning of a new era for inland water transport.”

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/barges-with-cargo-from-bihar-enter-assam-via-bangladesh/article25052766.ece>

This integrated movement through Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route which also covers parts of Sunderbans is being celebrated as the biggest voyages in recent history covering 2,085 km –for the transportation of fly-ash through inland water transport. However, obstacles like “heavy current in the river near Chandpur to upstream Baluchar, run-ins with the fishing boat in Bangladesh waters, blockage by the fishing boat as the barges inadvertently cut through the fishing nets” should be taken more seriously as these reflect the potential of such large scale movements in adversely affecting local livelihood strategies.

Read more on <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/bihar-assam-trip-for-cargo-barges-kindle-post-independence-river-transport-hope/article25097633.ece>