

MONTHLY UPDATES ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS OF INDIA

UPDATE-3

DEVELOPMENTS IN NOVEMBER 2018

- [Information received through RTI shows National Waterway-1 on Ganga cleared by overruling Experts Panel; Law Ministry aids Ministry of Shipping to evade clearance for Varanasi Multi-modal Terminal](#)
- [Environmental activists in Bangladesh demand Environmental Impact Assessment before dredging takes place in the rivers of Bangladesh for waterways](#)
- [Sand dredged from the rivers for development of National Waterway -5 disappears; District Administration could not collect royalty for the dredged sand](#)
- [Traffic Separation Scheme in the South-West Coast to prevent collision of vessels](#)
- [Preparations started to develop waterways on the Yamuna to connect Noida, Delhi to Prayagraj through inland water transport](#)

1. Information received through RTI shows National Waterway-1 on Ganga cleared by overruling Experts Panel; Law Ministry aids Ministry of Shipping to evade clearance for Varanasi Multi-modal Terminal

Background

On 12th November 2018, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Ramnagar Multimodal terminal at Varanasi (PIB, Ministry of Shipping, 08.11.2018). This multi-modal terminal is a part of National Waterway-1 on Ganga.

A container cargo of 16 TEU for Pepsico was transported to Varanasi from Haldia through National Waterway-1 on Ganga. The vessel, on its return journey, transported fertilizer from IFFCO, Allahabad.

The Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2006 (EIA Notification) governs the environmental clearance regime in the country and lists projects requiring prior clearance. "Waterways" do not find a direct mention in that list, but item 7(e) includes "Ports, Harbours, Breakwaters, Dredging."

Evasion of Environment Clearance for Dredging

Dredging or cutting the river bed to provide adequate depth and width for the development of the navigation channel is also a listed activity covered in item 7(e) under the schedule to the EIA Notification, 2006.

The Expert Appraisal Committee headed by Dr. S. R. Wate had recommended that Jal Marg Vikas Project (National Waterway -1 for Haldia-Varanasi stretch is covered under the EIA Notification, 2006 and be appraised as ‘Category A’ project. This committee further clarified that,

“In order to bring more clarity regarding the applicability of such projects under EIA Notification, 2006, the Expert Committee recommended for amending the EIA Notification, 2006 to include ‘Inland Waterways, Jetties and Multi-modal Terminals’ under the list of items requiring prior environmental clearance. However, Public Hearing in respect of Inland Waterways may be areas where facilities such as jetties, terminals, storage are created.”

Instead of amending EIA Notification, 2006, MoEFCC has given exemption to maintenance dredging for inland navigation in an office memorandum dated 21.12.2017.

Read more at [Ganga Waterway cleared after overruling expert panel.](#)

Environmental clearance for Ramnagar Multi-modal Terminal

There was a conflict between MoEFCC and ministry of Shipping for the applicability of environment clearance for Ramnagar Multi-modal terminal. They approached Ministry of Law and Justice for conflict resolution on whether this multi-modal terminal is a port, and hence, whether prior environment clearance is required for it. MoEFCC said terminal is a part of port and hence, EIA notification 2006 as amended from time to time is applicable for this terminal. However, Ministry of Law and Justice went back to Ministry of Shipping for clarification which obviously replied that Ramnagar Multi-modal terminal is not covered under Ports and does not attract EIA notification, 2006.

“A common sense definition would consider the Varanasi terminal as a “port”. The shipping ministry argued that it is not, and therefore item 7(e) of the EIA notification does not apply. The matter was referred to the law ministry, which instead of giving its own opinion, just accepted the opinion of the shipping ministry – as the administrative ministry for ports – a classic case of conflict of interest.”
(Source: [The Wire](#))

Read more at [law ministry helps ganga port evade environmental clearance; will the inauguration of ganga navigation destroy the river’s ecology](#)

The documents of these meetings were sourced from the information received by [Manthan Adhyayan Kendra](#) under Right to Information Act.

2. Environmental activists in Bangladesh demand Environmental Impact Assessment

before dredging takes place in the rivers of Bangladesh for waterways

Background

In 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the respective ministry of shipping of India and Bangladesh in which India agreed to bear the 80% of the cost for dredging required for the development of fairway from Sirajganj to Daikhowa and Ashuganj to Zakiganj on the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route. Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route is important for two reasons. First, Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route serves as an important link in connecting north-eastern region to rest of India, hence important for movement from Ganga (NW-1) to Brahmaputra (NW-2) through the Sundarbans (NW-97) and Bangladesh. Second, Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route is one of the 14 stretches of rivers from the Sundarbans which are clubbed together as National Waterway-97 (Sundarbans) under National Waterways Act, 2016. For recent developments and more information on Indo-Bangladesh Protocol, see [Update-2](#).

Update

Environment and river activists in Bangladesh demanded environment impact assessment and management plans before dredging or rivers commences in Bangladesh for development of fairway under the MOU signed between India and Bangladesh in 2017. A newage Bangladesh [article](#) reported that “They (Environment and river activists in Bangladesh) were shocked to hear that Bangladesh government agreed to dredge the Jamuna, the Surma, the Kangsha, the Kushiara and the Meghna without any environmental impact assessment and mitigation plans to keep these channels navigable for cargo ships of 2.5 meter draft even in the dry season.

They said it would be suicidal to create channels with 30-meter width and three-meter depth as it would multiply erosion and seriously affect the connectivity of adjacent areas inside Bangladesh by river.”

The article further quoted Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon joint general secretary Iqbal Habib who said that, “Without environmental impact assessment any development activity is violation of the law and the government under no circumstances can ignore the law...It would be nothing but criminal and suicidal acts if any hydro-ecological intervention is done without putting in place detailed environmental impact assessment and management plans.”

Read full article at <http://www.newagebd.net/article/57504/greens-demand-environmental-impact-assessment-management-plans>

3. Sand dredged from the rivers for development of National Waterway -5 disappears; District Administration could not collect royalty for the dredged sand

Background

Dredging or cutting the river bed to create the channel of adequate depth and width is an essential requirement of the development, maintenance and operations of inland waterways. Impacts of dredging include increased turbidity, noise, habitat destruction or fragmentation, release of settled sediments or

pollutants, diversion of water, etc. Consequently, fish catch and livelihood of the fishermen can get affected. Dredging is mentioned under activities which require prior environmental clearance under item 7(e) in the schedule to the EIA notification, 2006. Dredging is going on in many of the river stretches including Ganga (NW-1) for the development of waterways

See [Update-1](#) for ongoing dredging activities in the rivers for inland navigation through waterways.

National Waterway-5 is a 588km long waterway in the states of Odisha and West Bengal. According to an [article](#) an Orissapost, Dredging in NW-5 from Erada to Pandipal stretch of river Kani was done in phases. “In the first phase, dredging was done in an 11 km stretch from Erada to Angaispur and in the second phase it was done in a 14 km segment from Angaispur to Badamanatira. In the third phase, 11 km of Kani was dredged from Badamanatira to Padanipal. Locals say that although 11 lakh cubic metres of sand was mined from the riverbed, the district administration failed to collect royalty for it. As per rules, in order to mine sand, one has to deposit a sum of Rs 35 as royalty for every cubic metre mined. ZP member Ganesh Chandra Samal said the mafia duped the administration with the help of corrupt officials, and the sand was transported to Jaipur, Bhadrak and Balasore districts... As there is no clearance for constructing the National Waterway-5 from the Union Ministry of Environment, the project’s Detailed Project Report (DPR) has not been approved.”

Read more at <http://www.orissapost.com/sand-dredged-for-national-waterway-project-disappears/>

4. Traffic Separation Scheme in the South-West Coast to prevent collision of vessels

“The Directorate General of Shipping has proposed the establishment of a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) off the south-west coast of India to prevent collision incidents between merchant vessels and fishing vessels off the coast of Kerala. This proposal has been drawn taking into consideration past collision incidents off the Indian coast, traffic patterns of merchant vessels for past years, and optimum sea routes, in consonance with the current traffic flow, including simplification of traffic in converging areas off the coast of Kerala. The proposal has also considered aspects pertaining to the safety of navigation, maritime security and the separation of opposing streams of traffic to reduce incidents of collision in Indian waters.”

(Source: PIB release, Ministry of Shipping, 16th November 2018)

5. Preparations started to develop waterways on the Yamuna to connect Noida, Delhi to Prayagraj through inland water transport

Background

National Waterway-110 on Yamuna is a 1089km waterway planned from Jagatpur (6km upstream from Wazirabad barrage in Delhi to the confluence on Yamuna and Ganga at Sangam, Allahabad (now Prayagraj). It covers Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

A Detailed Project Report (DPR) and technical specifications for introduction of a Water Taxi Project in Delhi from Wazirabad to FatehpurJat (16 km) stretch of river Yamuna (National Waterway – 110) have been finalized and tenders were floated for implementation of the following three components,

including fairway development and reclamation of land. The clearance of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has been requested for construction work in the flood plains upstream of Wazirabad. New tenders have also been floated for the water taxi project on NW-110 from Sonia Vihar to Tronica City in Delhi.

Update

“The waterway going to Prayagraj on Yamuna river will also connect Delhi with Noida. Detailed discussions have been held on a joint workshop of Transport Department of the Uttar Pradesh and Inland Waterways Authority of India. The DPR of the project is being prepared”, said Aradhana Shukla, principal secretary, Uttar Pradesh Transport Department and Officer on Special Duty, Noida.” Read more at <https://urbantransportnews.com/iwai-starts-preparation-works-to-connect-prayagraj-to-noida-with-waterways/>