

MONTHLY UPDATES ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS OF INDIA

UPDATE-8
April 2019

This update covers the following:

- [River Cruises to Sundarbans through National Waterways](#)
- [Experts say water hyacinth a problem for Kochi Water Metro; TORs amended in March](#)
- [Concerns raised on Yamuna Ferry services](#)
- [Land acquisition for Phase-II of the Varanasi Multi-modal terminal](#)

1. River Cruises on Brahmaputra, Ganga, Sundarbans

“The first Indo-Bangladesh river cruise recently set sail on the Brahmaputra on its first ever journey to Kolkata via Bangladesh. Earlier, India and Bangladesh agreed to explore cruise options between Kolkata and Guwahati via Dhaka, which lead to a successful trial movement of cargo through the



route, thereby prompting cruise operators to start operations on the said route.

(Refer [Update- 2](#) for background)

MV Mahabaahu, the cruise ship, recently left the Pandu port carrying 30 passengers on board, along with 9 foreigners, for a 17-day voyage. Some of the prominent pit stops of this cruise ship are three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Manas National Park in Assam, Mosque City of Bagerhat in Bangladesh, and the Sundarbans among others.”

Indo-Bangladesh River Cruise on Brahmaputra. Source: [Deccan Herald](#).

See more at

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/first-ever-indo-bangladesh-cruise-ship-starts-its-voyage-on-brahmaputra/as69115454.cms>, <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/first-indo-bangla-river-cruise-sets-sail-on-brahmaputra-731297.html>

River cruises are increasingly being pushed on the National Waterways, especially on NW-1 (Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly), NW-2 (Brahmaputra) and NW-97 (Waterways of Sundarbans including the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route). National Waterways are being celebrated as an important vehicle for promoting eco-tourism and for generating more employment opportunities. However, in the area of conservation, tourism is blamed for increasing pollution and harming the health of the ecosystem by tourists who are considered 'outsiders' and insensitive to the ecology by the locals and conservation agencies (Ghosh, Priyanka, and Aditya Ghosh. "Is ecotourism a panacea? Political ecology perspectives from the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve, India." *GeoJournal* 84.2 (2019): 345-366..)

2. Experts say water hyacinth a problem for Kochi Water Metro; TORs amended in March



Source: [Kochi Metro Blog](#)

The Kochi Water Metro project is an integrated water transport project under Kochi Metro Rail Limited, being implemented at a cost of Rs.747 crore with financial assistance from the German Bank, KfW. “Kochi is the first city in the country to have achieved such a milestone whereby water transport has been integrated as a feeder service to the metro. It is also for the first time in India that such a significant level of investment is being brought in for improving water transport.”

(<https://kochimetro.org/water-transport/>)

The project envisages the development of 15 identified routes, connecting 10 islands along a network of routes that span 78.2 km, according to the recent Terms of Reference letter issued by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (07.03.2019). The project intends to bring in a fleet of 78 fast, fuel efficient, air-conditioned ferries plying to 38 jetties, 18 of which will be developed as main boat hubs, while the remaining 20 will be minor jetties for transit services.

“With Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) set to shortlist a firm to manufacture the first batch of 23 ferries for the Water Metro project on April 20, stakeholders have expressed concern about floating and underwater obstructions that abound in the Kochi backwaters, getting entangled on their propeller.

The winning bidder from among four joint-venture consortiums in the fray is expected to deliver the first ferry in December. It is slated to operate on the Vyttila-Kakkanad route, where obstructions like water hyacinth abound. Apart from water hyacinth, the floating and underwater obstructions in the backwaters include discarded nets and other fishing gear, nylon and other ropes, plastic and other waste materials

Meanwhile, a KMRL official said the management of weeds that float on the surface was part of the Water Metro project. The focus will shift to that once the tender for ferries is finalised, he added. The revised deadline to submit bids to manufacture the 23 ferries is April 17. The ₹750-crore project aims to introduce 78 modern AC ferries in the Greater Kochi area by 2021, in batches.”

Read more at <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/experts-for-clearing-water-metro-corridor/article26824910.ece>

The Kochi Water Metro Project is a public transport project proposed in Kerala. The Project applied for the grant of environment clearance as Category A project under item 7 (e) (Ports, Harbours, Dredging) in the Schedule to the EIA Notification, 2006. The project is similar but smaller in scale than the [ferries planned in the National Waterway-1](#). In fact, Water Metro project is planned on a stretch of National Waterway-3. (Refer [Update - 5](#)) However, environment clearance for National Waterways is being evaded. Read more at https://www.manthan-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CM_LIV_8_230219_Shripad_Dharmadhikary.pdf

3. Concerns raised on the ferry services in Yamuna



Yamuna ghat at Kalindi Kunj.
Source: [Business Standard](#)

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. Refer [Update -3](#).

“A visit to a ghat of the river next to Kalindi Kunj metro station in Delhi explains why: Flowers and fruit offerings after religious services are dumped into the river at this spot. The water is frothy on the surface and pitch-black underneath. The stench is unbearable. It is hard to stand there, let alone imagine holiday makers and tourists boarding a boat.

Kashyap had no clue that a ferry service was proposed from Delhi to the Taj Mahal. Whether it was the remote hamlet of Chhainsa in Haryana or the temple town of Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, the story is the same: The Yamuna is no cleaner than the neighbourhood drain.

Shyam Sharma runs a 75-year-old sweet shop in Vrindavan. “One could see the river bed underneath 25 years ago, so clear was the water. But now the river stinks as all the drains in the city are discharged into it,” he said.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) engaged WAPCOS, a state-owned consultancy firm under the Ministry of Water Resources, to ascertain the feasibility of a Delhi-Agra ferry service and prepare a report on the project. The agency is yet to submit its report. Until then, engineers working with the central and state governments have doubts about the proposal.”

Read more at https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/yet-to-achieve-promise-of-running-a-ferry-on-yamuna-still-a-promise-119041100471_1.html;
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177535>

4. Land Acquisition for Varanasi multi-modal terminal (Phase-II)

“The proposal for operation, management and development of the multimodal terminal at Varanasi under the PPP Model was appraised by the Public-Private Partnership Approval Committee (PPPAC) of the Department of Economic Affairs on 28.02.2019.

The estimated cost of Acquisition of 27.543 ha. of land for development of Phase-II of the MMT Varanasi is INR 209.58 crores. After detailed survey, availability of land for acquisition is fixed at 27.733 ha. Land measuring 13.552 ha. has been acquired and payment of Rs.100.47 crores made towards land cost. Acquisition process for the remaining 14.181 ha. of land completed and the process for compensation/registration of land is at an advanced stage.

Detailed land survey has been completed by M/s EPIL for acquisition of 33.26 ha. of land for the rail connectivity from IWT Terminal to Jeonathpur Railway station. Requisition for acquisition of 33.26

ha land to be filed with the Distt. Admn, Varanasi after the Consultant submits the revised ESP and approval of the same by DFCCIL.” (Major Project Status, April 2019; <http://iwai.nic.in/>)

Read more at [First Multi-modal terminal faces land, capacity challenges in Varanasi;](https://thewire.in/environment/inland-waterways-flagship-project-varanasi-ganga-environment)
<https://thewire.in/environment/inland-waterways-flagship-project-varanasi-ganga-environment>

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