

Manthan Adhyayan Kendra

MONTHLY UPDATES ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS OF INDIA

UPDATE-12
August 2019

This update covers the following:

- [Bhutnese Cargo stuck at Chilmari Port in Bangladesh](#)
- [Largest Container Cargo on National Waterway- 1 for Adani Logistics stuck at Bhagalpur](#)
- [Big private players revive commercial navigation through inland water transport; Fishworkers raise concern on livelihood and employment](#)
- [Dredging in Ganga to be initiated between Bhagalpur to Munger for NW-1](#)
- [Model DPR for low-cost ferry services in the North-Eastern States](#)
- [Cargo movement to start from Kolghat jetty from March 2020](#)

1. Bhutnese Cargo stuck at Chilmari Port in Bangladesh



(Shri Mansukh Mandaviya digitally flagging off the vessel carrying Bhutenese Cargo to Bangladesh.

Source: [IWA](#))

On 12th July 2019, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for Shipping (Independent Charge) digitally flagged off a ship of Inland Waterways Authority of India carrying stone aggregates from Bhutan to be delivered to Bangladesh. Shri Mansukh Mandaviya called this development a historic one and said on the occasion that, *“transport of cargo through this route will cut short travel time by 8 to 10 days, and reduce transportation cost by 30%, bringing down logistics costs.”* ([PIB release](#))

However, according to [a news report](#), the vessels carrying Bhutnese Cargo were stuck at the Chilmari River port in Kurigram for more than two weeks as the customs authorities refused to permit the vessels to sail further ahead. The reason cited for delay was that the Chilmari River Port was not authorised yet for passing imports from a third country like Bhutan. The importer incurred a loss of Tk 30,000 daily for the delay. The importers had taken the permission for this movement from Inland Waterways Authority of India and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority. It reflects that Authorities of Waterways in India and Bangladesh are in a rush to implement the activities on the National waterways without being fully prepared with supporting infrastructure or measures. ([See Update -11](#) for more)

2. Largest Container Cargo on National Waterway -1 for Adani Logistics stuck at Bhagalpur



(Adani's Cargo being flagged off from Garden Reach Jetty-II on 31st July 2019. Source:[IWA](#))

Similarly another 'historic' development of transporting vessel carrying 52 container cargo ([largest container cargo on NW-1](#)) for Adani logistics through NW-1 on Ganga could not be completed as the vessel got stuck at Bhagalpur in Bihar. Container cargo was transported to Gaihat terminal in Patna through trucks. The vessel travelling from Haldia was supposed to reach Gaihat terminal in Patna by 8th August 2019. However, the ship was stuck at Bhagalpur for 10 ten days due to the increase in water-level in Ganga and there was not enough vertical clearance for the ship to cross Vikramshila bridge. ([See Update-11](#))

While the increased water level is the problem in this instance for smooth navigation across the National Waterway-1, a passenger ship carrying tourists from Germany had gotten stuck in January 2018 at Bhagalpur Engineering college due to shallow river bed. The tourists were then carried by

small ferry boats by SDRF and IWAI team to Bhagalpur. It seems that shallow depth and increased water level are both bottlenecks for smooth navigation on the National Waterway-1. This shows that the Inland Waterways Authority of India probably needs to rethink the size of the vessels for operations on the National Waterways.

Read more at <https://www.bhaskar.com/bihar/patna/news/ship-on-gaighat-jetty-could-not-reach-trapped-on-the-way-061005-5396645.html>

3. Big private players reviving rivers through commercial cargo movement on National Waterways; Fishworkers raise concerns on livelihood and environment

According to [the news reports](#), Inland Waterways Authority of India has said that it aims to increase cargo transportation through inland water transport to 120 million tonne by 2023 from the current 72 million tonne. A number of cargo owners, mostly big private players such as PepsiCo, Emami Agrotech, Dabur India and recently Adani logistics have used National Waterway-1. Few integrated cargo movements on NW-1 (Ganga), Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route and NW-2 (Brahmaputra) have also taken place for the transport of stone- chips, coal and fly-ash through these waterways.

Though the National Waterways Project has been conceived as a project for the greener and cost-effective alternative mode of transport which has the potential to generate employment opportunities, fishworkers find this project a threat to their livelihood.

"We understand that the State has received to launch coastal shipping services once the National Waterways are operational. But it will affect an entire community engaged in pelagic fishing as they won't be able to cast their nets amidst cargo movement. Introducing shipping services shouldn't be at the cost of our livelihood and if the route is within 21 nautical miles of territorial waters it will be disastrous."

(T. Peter, general secretary, National Fishworkers' Forum, [The Hindu](#))

The fishworkers also condemned the lack of studies to ascertain the damage this project will pose to the traditional fishworkers through its impact on the environment.

The livelihood issues due to the National Waterways of the fishworkers engaged in the inland fisheries has not gotten as much coverage till now. It could be because of the fact that most National Waterways where barge operations have developed significantly so far are located in the tidal zones.

Read more at -

<https://www.constructionweekonline.in/projects-tenders/10549-iwai-aims-120mt-inland-waterways-cargo-movement-by-2023?amp>

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/sagarmala-will-spell-doom-for-fishers-nff/article28839272.ece>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-transport/iwai-aims-120mt-inland-waterways-cargo-movement-by-2023/printarticle/70469420.cms>

4. Dredging in Ganga to be initiated between Bhagalpur and Munger for National Waterway-1

According to [a news report](#), the Inland Waterways Authority of India has initiated steps for dredging of the riverbed of the Ganga between Pirpainty (Bhagalpur) and Munger to increase the depth of the Ganga at Bhagalpur. The news report also quoted the Deputy Director of IWAI (Regional Office,

Sahebganj) who confirmed that the dredging work has been initiated to remove the silt from the riverbed of Ganga and said that *“the watercourse that has drifted towards Naugachia (northward) will be brought to southward towards Barari (Bhagalpur).”*

Dredging for development of the waterways is also often brought to the fore in the news reports as a measure to control floods. However, the problem of silt in the alluvial rivers is huge. The dredging ongoing/ proposed for the development of the waterways is for maintaining or creating the required depth in the navigation channel. There is hardly any concrete plan for the management or disposal of the dredged material in the Detailed Project Reports of the National Waterways. Moreover, dredging as an activity is listed under the activities which require prior environmental clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 because of the adverse impacts it causes in the riverine ecosystem including changes in river morphology, turbidity, habitat destruction for aquatic animals, noise, etc. (See [Update – 11](#))

5. Model DPR for low cost ferry in the North –East



Representative Image. Source: [Financial Express](#))

According to the news reports, a public sector company- WAPCOS is preparing a model DPR (Detailed Project Report) for implementing projects for running low cost ferry services in the inland waterways in the North Eastern states of the country. This model DPR can also be adopted for quick implementation by the Inland Waterways Authority of India in consultation with the different state governments in the region.

Read more -

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2019/aug/01/wapcos-preparing-project-report-for-low-cost-ferry-services-in-north-east-2012292.html>

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/ministry-of-shipping-keen-to-start-inland-waterways-navigation-and-passenger-transportation-in-north-eastern-states-119073100590_1.html

6. Cargo movement to start from Kolghat jetty in March 2020 (NW-86)

India and Bangladesh on 24th -25th October 2018 had agreed to consider inclusion of Rupnarayan river (National Waterway-86) from Geonkhali to Kolaghat in the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route and to declare Kolaghat in West Bengal as a new Port of Call in the meeting of the [19th Standing Committee under 'Protocol of Trade and Transit'](#). This arrangement is being considered to facilitate movement of flyash, cement, construction materials etc from India to Bangladesh through inland water transport on Rupnarayan river.

According to a news report, the Kolaghat jetty is expected to transport cargo from March 2020. Rupnarayan river (NW-86) connects with Ganga (NW-1) at Geokhali near Haldia. The news report further adds that, *"IWAI (Inland Waterways Authority of India) expects a lot of flyash movement from Kolaghat to Bangladesh with Indian Vessels being able to load it, once the Kolaghat jetty gets operational."*

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/cargo-operations-to-start-at-kolaghat-jetty-from-march-2020-366607>