

## MONTHLY UPDATES ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS OF INDIA

UPDATE- 20  
December 2021

This update covers the following:

- [Zero Cargo vessels handled in the Sahibganj Multimodal terminal of the Ganga Waterway in 2021-22 \(till now\)](#)
- [No study done so far to study the impacts/disruption on aquatic or aerial biodiversity caused by Seaplane services](#)
- [IWAI releases tender for Capital dredging in National Waterway-3 in Kerala without environment clearance](#)
- [Shipping Ministry Year End Review 2021 for Inland Water Transport mentions Mahabahu Brahmaputra, Signing of MoUs, Stakeholder Conclave, Inland Vessels Bill 2021 and Increased movement of cargo on National Waterways](#)

### 1. Zero Cargo Vessels handled in the Sahibganj Multimodal terminal of the Ganga Waterway in 2021-22 (till now)

On 17.12.2021, it was stated in the [Lok Sabha](#) that no cargo vessels were handled in 2021-2022 (till now) at the Sahibganj Multimodal terminal of the Ganga Waterway. In [September 2019](#), the Prime Minister inaugurated the Sahibganj multimodal terminal in Jharkhand as part of the Jal Marg Vikas Project for capacity augmentation of the Ganga National Waterway. This Multimodal terminal is constructed at the cost of Rs 280 crores for 3 million Metric tonnes capacity and displacement of around 485 families whose lands were acquired using the Land Acquisition, R&R Act, 2013.

During the inauguration of this multimodal terminal in 2019, the official release stated the potential of the terminal with capacity of 3 MMT would grow to 5 MMT after further investment.

“The capacity of the terminal is 30 lakh tonnes per annum. It will grow to 54.8 lakh tonnes per annum after an investment of Rs 376 crores for capacity enhancement in Phase II under PPP mode. The development in Phase II will be entirely made by the private concessionaire. Further, a freight village is also proposed on 335 acres of land in contiguity with the terminal.” (PIB release, 10.09.2019)

The fact that no cargo vessel was handled at the terminal so far in 2021-22 reflects on the non-utilization of existing capacity. The plans to further expand the capacity of this Multi-modal terminal to more than 5 MMTPA in phase-II should be revisited.

**Annex.-II**

**DETAILS OF VESSELS AND CARGO HANDLED AT SAHIBGANJ MMT BY IWAI**

As this sector is at nascent stage, there have been pilot movements via **Sahibganj Multi-Modal Terminal**, the details are as under :-

**Cargo in Matric Tones (MT)**

Terminal Name	Year of Commissioning	2018-19	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22 (till now)	
		Cargo (MT)	No. of Vessels Handled	Cargo (MT)	No. of Vessels Handled	Cargo (MT)	No. of Vessels Handled	Cargo (MT)
MMT	September-2019		11	7,952	7	4,962	NIL	
Ro-Ro Operation #		4,94,574		5,17,360		4,73,400		69,600*

\*- Cargo data from April to October-2021

#-Ro – Ro cargo handled at Sahibganj (Samdaghat)

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(Source: Lok Sabha Question No \*198, Answered on 10.12.2021, ‘Multi-modal Waterways Terminal’)

See [Update -19](#) which covers how the newly inaugurated Multimodal terminals at Varanasi and Sahibganj have been failing over the years after their inaugurations to attract bids from private players.

**2. No study done so far to study the impacts/disruption on aquatic or aerial biodiversity caused by Seaplane services**

Under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) -UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik), 14 water aerodrome routes have been awarded to connect the seaplane routes in India. The first seaplane service connecting the Statue of Unity in Kevadia and Sabarmati Seaplane was inaugurated in October 2020. However, after facing many rounds of suspensions, the services have not resumed till date. It shows that haste in planning of these emerging modes of transport. But more important is the manner in which prior impact assessments are being bypassed for the seaplane operations and infrastructure. In a recent question answered in the [Lok Sabha](#) on whether any study on the disruption of aquatic and aerial biodiversity in the lakes which facilitate the service to the seaplanes, the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways stated that, “so far no study on the disruption of aquatic and aerial biodiversity in the lakes has been conducted by Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.”

It is also interesting to note that various relaxations are being given to make these seaplane services viable. (Source: Lok Sabha Question no. 2261, answered on 10.12.2021, *Seaplane Service*)

Also read with the link below to know more on how the environment clearance procedure was relaxed by Ministry of Environment keeping aside the recommendations of its own expert committees for seaplane services in the draft EIA Notification 2020.

<https://article-14.com/post/the-prime-minister-likes-seaplanes-environmental-laws-are-being-swept-aside-for-them-616e55db6862c>

Read more on the suspended services and rising water hyacinth on the Sabarmati Seaplane site in our [Update-19](#)

### **3. IWAI releases tender for Capital dredging in National Waterway-3 in Kerala without environment clearance**

IWAI has recently released a tender for 'Capital dredging' for a stretch of National Waterway-3 in Kerala. The quantity to be dredged / excavated in the stretch Edappallikotta – Kollam of NW-3 (17 km stretch of NW-3) is estimated by IWAI at only 0.825 lakh Cu. m. It is reported in Official reports of the Shipping Ministry that Capital dredging was done for other stretches of NW-3 in recent years, and the work met with resistance from the local population and fishing community, especially with regards to disposal of dredged material.

Capital dredging is an intrusive activity in the river-bed with which the shipping navigation channel is either created or deepened. Capital dredging is also listed in the EIA Notification 2006 in the category of activities which need prior environment clearance. On the Parivesh portal, no application is visible for this activity for National Waterway -3.

The tender can be accessed from [Capital dredging, widening of narrow canals, bank protection, removal of obstructions and relocation of utilities in Edappallikotta - Kollam stretch of NW.3](#)

### **4. Shipping Ministry Year End Review 2021 for Inland Water Transport mentions Mahabahu Brahmaputra, Signing of MoUs, Stakeholder Conclave, Inland Vessels Bill 2021 and Increased movement of cargo on National Waterways**

Year End review 2021 for Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways mentions the following under Inland Water Transport -

(i) Inauguration of projects by Prime Minister

Prime Minister digitally launched Mahabahu Brahmaputra in Assam on 18.02.2021 and inaugurated the following initiatives of IWAI: -

Flagging off of 4 Ro-Pax vessels to be operated by Govt. of Assam.

MV JFR Jacob – for service between Guwahati and North Guwahati.

MV Bob Khathing – for service between Dhubri and Hatsingimari.

MV Rani Gaidinllu and MV Sachin Dev Burman – for service between Neamati and Kamalabari (Majuli).

Foundation stone for construction of 4 tourist jetties at Jogighopa, Pandu, Biswanathghat and Neamati.

Foundation Stone for construction of IWT terminal at Jogighopa.

Dedication of IWAI digital portals Card and PANI to the Nation

(ii) Signing of MoUs

In presence of Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, IWAI signed MoUs on 26.08.2021 with:

Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) for development of Dhansiri River (NW-31) for movement of Over Dimensional Cargo (ODC) and Project Cargo of Numaligarh Refinery using Inland Water Transport.

Hooghly Cochin Shipyard Limited (HSCL), a subsidiary of Cochin Shipyard Limited for construction of Ship Repair Facility Project at Pandu, Guwahati, Assam.

(iii) Stakeholder Conclave

A Stakeholder Conclave was organized on “Waterways as Engine of Growth” at Guwahati on 27th August, 2021. Minister of State for Ports Shipping & Waterways and stakeholders participated in the Conclave.

(iv) Movement of cargo on National Waterways

The Cargo movement on National Waterways continued to be encouraging. This year so far 54.03 Million Ton has been achieved from April-October 2021 against 37.22 Million Ton last year for the same period recording 45.15% increase.

(v) Inland Vessels Bill, 2021

Parliament on 02.08.2021 passed the Inland Vessels Bill, 2021, which aims to replace over 100 years old Inland Vessels Act, 1917 (1 of 1917) and usher a new era in the inland water transport sector to make the Legislative framework user friendly and promote ease of doing business.

Source: PIB release dated 21.12.2021, [Year End Review 2021](#) Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways