

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5707**  
ANSWERED ON 04.04.2025

**EXPANSION OF INLAND WATERWAYS**

5707. SHRI LUMBARAM CHOUDHARY:  
DR. BHOLA SINGH:  
SHRI YOGENDER CHANDOLIA:  
SMT. SHOBHANABEN MAHENDRASINH BARAIYA:  
DR. HEMANT VISHNU SAVARA:  
SMT. KAMLESH JANGDE:  
SHRI PRAVEEN PATEL:  
SHRI DILIP SAIKIA:  
SHRI ALOK SHARMA:

Will the Minister of PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS be pleased to state:

**पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री**

- (a) the number of inland waterways operational in the country as on February 2025;
- (b) the total stretch of operational inland waterways in the country as on February 2025;
- (c) whether the Government has taken steps for the expansion of inland waterways in the country including the North-Eastern States and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the steps being taken to ensure the sustainability of inland waterways; and
- (e) the challenges faced in expanding inland waterways and the steps being taken to address them?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS  
(SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL)

- (a) 29 National Waterways are operational in the country as on February, 2025.
- (b) The total stretch of operational National Waterways (NWs) in the country as on February, 2025 is 5131 km.

(c) For the expansion of inland waterways in the country including the North-Eastern States, 111 National Waterways (NWs) have been declared vide National Waterways Act, 2016 which includes 20 NWs of North Eastern Region (NER).

(d) Steps taken to promote and ensure the sustainability of National Waterways through infrastructure and policy measures by the Government include (a) Infrastructure measures i.e. fairway maintenance works (river training, maintenance dredging, channel marking and regular hydrographic surveys), construction of community jetties, floating terminals, Multi-Modal Terminals (MMTs), Inter-Modal Terminals (IMT) and Navigational Lock etc. (b) Policy measures i.e. launch of Jalvihak Scheme, notification of National Waterways (Construction of Jetties/Terminal) Regulations, 2015, integration with ports, digitalization, cargo aggregation, shift of cargo by Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and promotion of river cruise tourism.

(e) Siltation of the river is a big issue. In addition, high river flow velocity during flood season and low discharge during lean period along with high water level variation makes the development and maintenance of waterway difficult. To counter these difficulties, additional dredgers are deployed to develop and maintain the waterway along with river conservancy measures like bandalling, bottom panelling and providing navigational aids for safe sailing of vessels.

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