GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4652
ANSWERED ON 28.03.2025

INTERMODAL CONNECTIVITY FOR FREIGHT TRAFFIC

4652. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY:

Will the Minister of PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS be pleased to state:
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

(a) the current modal share of freight traffic in the country with a breakdown of the share of waterways, railways and road transport;
(b) the steps being taken by the Government to enhance intermodal connectivity for freight movement and improve coordination between waterways, railways and road transport to reduce logistics costs;
(c) the progress of the Kalughat terminal including its current status, expected completion timeline and its role in boosting freight traffic in Bihar, particularly in Saran;
(d) the total freight traffic handled through inland waterways in Bihar, particularly in Saran in the last three years and the measures being taken to increase cargo movement through these routes; and
(e) whether the Government is ensuring that connectivity of newly notified waterways with major ports, rail and road networks is integrated at the project planning stage, as recommended by the relevant committee and the specific steps taken in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) Current modal share of Inland Water Transport in the country's freight traffic is approximately 2 %. As per NITI Aayog Report titled "FAST TRACKING FREIGHT IN INDIA" of 2021, railways and road transport's modal share of freight traffic is 18 % and 71 % respectively.

(b) Government has taken following steps to enhance intermodal connectivity for freight movement and improve coordination between waterways, railways and road transport to reduce logistics costs:-

(i) Integration of developed Multi Modal Terminals (MMTs) at Varanasi, Sahibganj, Haldia and Intermodal terminal at Kalughat along with other terminals on NW-1 with Shyama Prasad Mookherjee Port, Kolkata.

(ii) Development of cargo aggregation hub – Freight Village at Varanasi and Integrated Cluster-cum-Logistics Park, Sahibganj on NW-1.

(iii) The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of Co-operation, Department of Fertiliser, Ministry of Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Heavy Industries, Ministry of Steel and Ministry of Coal have been requested to advise the Public Sector Undertakings under their jurisdiction to utilise Inland Water Transport (IWT) mode as far as possible and earmark certain percentage of their cargo for IWT mode.

(c) The construction for Inter-Modal Terminal (IMT), Kalughat has been completed**.** Kalughat terminal has primarily been built to handle cargo traffic originating/bound to north Bihar and Nepal. Key findings of traffic studies highlighting the role of IMT Kalughat in boosting freight traffic in Bihar, particularly in Saran are detailed at **Annexure-1.**

(d) The total freight traffic through Waterways in Bihar for the last three years is as detailed below.

(In Metric Tons)

NW No.	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**
NW-1	10,927,788	13,169,853	12,824,112
NW-94	-	-	1,160,929

The policy and infrastructure measures taken to increase cargo movement on NWs in the country including Bihar are detailed in **Annexure-2.**

(e) Connectivity of newly notified waterways with major ports, rail and road networks is taken into account at the project planning stage and the aspect is well taken care of while completing the Feasibility Study Reports (FSR) and Detailed Project Reports(DPRs) of all new NWs. Steps taken are mentioned in reply to (b) above.

Annexure-1

(i) TRAFFIC FORECAST

As per the traffic study done, Kalughat IMT is an ideal location for transferring containers, shipped on the NW-1 from Kolkata GRT, for onward trucking into the Katmandu Valley of Nepal. Also, no bridge needs to be crossed by truck traffic, as this area lies north of the Ganges River.

(ii) PROJECTED TRAFFIC

Traffic through a future Kalughat IMT would be concentrated on dry-bulk and containerized cargo. Table Below shows the Kalughat Terminal cargo forecast, 2020-2045

Year	Bagged	General Cargo	Container	Total
	(MMT)	(MMT)	(MMT)	(MMT)
2020	0.11	0.06	4.03	4.21
2025	0.12	0.07	4.35	4.54
2035	0.12	0.08	4.79	4.99
2045	0.12	0.08	5.17	5.38

Total cargo traffic in the year 2045 would amount to 5.38 MMT, of which more than 90% would constitute containerized cargo.

(iii) TRAFFIC TO BE HANDLED

Despite Kalughat having high traffic potential, considering the space constraint, it was decided to handle Container traffic only at this terminal. Although traffic projection shows substantial volume of containers, capacity of the berth and backup yard will govern the actual handling of Container volume. The capacity of the terminal with one berth will be maximum 77000 TEU per annum.

To boost freight traffic, IWAI has constructed the following facilities at IMT Kalughat such as Storage Areas, Terminal administration building, Worker's amenity building, Electrical substation building, Security office, Weigh bridge control room, Toilet Block Gate house, boundary wall and fencing, Underground reservoir and pump house etc.

Annexure-2

(a) Policy Measures:

• A scheme for providing 35% incentive to promote the utilization of inland waterways transport sector by cargo owners and for establishing scheduled service for cargo movement on NW-1 and NW-2 and NW-16 via Indo Bangladesh Protocol has been approved by the Government. This scheme is expected to divert 800 million tonne Km cargo on IWT mode, which is nearly 17% of the current cargo of 4700 million tonne Km on NWs. The scheme is at a cost of less than 100 Crore for three years and can be scaled up or modified depending on the success of the scheme. The scheme also aims to start a scheduled waterway cargo service between Kolkata and Varanasi/Pandu using IWAI vessels through Shipping Corporation of India for demonstration effect and to increase trust of cargo movers/owners in the waterway movement.

• An extension of the tonnage tax scheme to inland vessels registered under the Indian Vessels Act, 2021 is announced during the budget presented on 01.02.2025. Inland vessels operating on National Waterways, rivers, and canals,will be benefited. This move is expected to boost the industry's competitiveness and encourage more cargo owners to use inland waterways for transportation. A tonnage tax system is a special taxation policy for shipping companies where tax is not based on actual profits but on the size (tonnage) of the vessel. It provides stable, predictable, and lower taxation for vessel owners, reducing their financial burden.

• The National Waterways (Construction of Jetties / Terminals) Regulations 2025 has been notified, allowing private companies to invest and operate Inland Waterways infrastructure by providing a clear regulatory framework to attract private sector investment for facilitating the growth of inland waterways sector.

• Integration with Ports: World over, waterways are most optimally utilised if they are linked to ports. Kolkata port offers an opportunity of seamless integration with NW1 and can also help in resolving the problem of multi modality. Therefore, Multi Modal Terminals at Varanasi, Sahibganj, Haldia and Intermodal terminal at Kalughat along with other terminals on NW-1 are being transferred to Shyama Prasad Mookherjee Port, Kolkata for operation and management.

• Digitalisation: To increase ease of doing business in the IWT sector, along the same lines as ‘vahan’ and ‘sarathi’, a central data base and portal is being developed for registration of vessels and crew all over the country. This will facilitate registration of vessels and crew digitally and would also provide accurate status on number of vessels and crew in the country and thus help in planning.

• Cargo Aggregation: The cargo movement on the waterways suffer from problems of multimodality because of lack of industries along the waterways. Therefore, projects for development of cargo aggregation hub – Freight Village at Varanasi and Integrated Cluster- cum-Logistics Park, Sahibganj have been taken up. NHLML, a PSU under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has been engaged for development of these MMLPs. The work of Rail connectivity for three MMTs has been assigned to M/s Indian Port and Rail Company Ltd. (A PSU under MoPSW).

• River Cruise Tourism: To promote river cruise tourism, number of meetings with cruise operators have been organised. Based on their feedback, steps like provision of shore power at IWAI terminals, extra berthing arrangements, etc. have been made. New cruise circuits have been identified and are being operationalised. A total of 34 Waterways have been identified for cruise movement out of which 10 have already been operationalised.

• IBP Route: Indo Bangladesh Protocol route no. 5 & 6 between Maia and Sultanganj has been operationalized recently with successful trial movements. Regular movement shall commence shortly, once the consent of Bangladesh Side is received.

• Shift of cargo by PSUs: For modal shift of cargo to waterways, more than 140 Public Sector Units have been approached to plan their movement using Inland Water Transport mode. They have been requested to outline their current status of cargo movement through the waterways and their plan for modal shift of cargo. The Ministry of PNG, Co-operation/ Fertiliser, Food & Public distribution, Heavy industries, Steel and Coal have been requested to advise the PSUs under their jurisdiction to utilise IWT mode as far as possible and earmark certain percentage of their cargo for IWT mode keeping in line the MIV targets.

(b) Infrastructure measures:

(i) Fairway maintenance works (river training, maintenance dredging, channel marking and regular hydrographic surveys) are taken up in various National Waterways (NWs) for providing a navigation channel of 35/45 m width and 2.0 / 2.2 / 2.5 / 3.0 m least available depth (LAD) for operation of vessels.

(ii) 49 community jetties, 20 floating terminals, 3 Multi-Modal Terminals (MMTs) and 1 Inter-Modal Terminal (IMT) have been constructed on NW-1 (River Ganga) in addition to 5 pre-existing permanent terminals.

(iii) 12 floating terminals provided on NW-2 (River Brahmaputra) along with MMTs at Pandu, Jogighopa and terminals at Bogibeel and Dhubri are also used for berthing of river cargo/ cruise vessels. Four dedicated Jetties have been provided at Jogighopa, Pandu, Biswanath Ghat and Neamati with an investment of Rs. 7.09 crores. In addition to this, Jetties for cruise and passengers have been constructed at Sadiya, Lyka and Orium Ghat in Assam.

(iv)9 Permanent Inland Water Transport terminals with godowns and 2 Ro-Ro/Ro-Pax terminals have been constructed on NW-3 (West Coast Canal in Kerala).

(v) 03 floating concrete jetties were provided to Govt. of Goa in 2020 and 01 during September 2022 and installed in Mandovi River (NW-68). 4 Tourist Jetties on part of NW-4 (River Krishna) in Andhra Pradesh have been commissioned and 12 Nos. floating jetties on NW-110 (River Yamuna) in Mathura-Vrindavan stretch in Uttar Pradesh, 2 Jetties on NW-73 (River Narmada) & 2 Jetties on NW-37 (River Gandak) in Bihar are under execution.

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