

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2708**  
ANSWERED ON 12.08.2025

**ROLE OF INLAND WATERWAYS IN FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION**

2708. SMT. RAMILABEN BECHARBHAI BARA:  
SHRI NARAYANA KORAGAPPA:  
SHRI NARHARI AMIN:  
SHRI BABURAM NISHAD:

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

- (a) the total volume of cargo movement recorded on National Waterways each year in the last five years and whether it has increased year after year;
- (b) the amount of reduction seen in total logistics costs and carbon emissions due to the shift to inland waterways as a mode of transport as compared to road and rail transport;
- (c) the status of multi-mode logistics hubs proposed or under construction along major national waterways; and
- (d) the manner in which these are being integrated with dedicated freight corridors, industrial corridors and coastal economic zones?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) The details of cargo movement on National Waterways (NWs) during last five years along with the annual growth rate is given below:

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Cargo movement (in Million Tonnes)	83.61	108.79	126.15	133.03	145.84
Annual Growth over previous year	-	30.13%	15.95%	5.45%	9.63%

(b) The Inland Water Transport (IWT) is economical, safe and environment friendly mode of transportation. As per the study conducted by the World Bank, the operating cost is Rs. 1.2 per Ton Kilometre by IWT mode, Rs. 1.4 per Ton Kilometre by Rail and Rs. 2.28 per Ton Kilometre by Road. Socio-economic and environmental benefits of Inland Water Transport (IWT) compared to Rail and Road are detailed at **Annexure -1**.

(c) & (d) Along NW-1 (Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system), Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has engaged National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) [a subsidiary of National Highway Authority of India (NHAI)] for development of two multimodal logistics hubs i.e. Freight Village at Varanasi and Industrial cum Logistics Park (ICLP) at Sahibganj, adjacent to Varanasi and Sahibganj Multi Modal Terminals respectively.

India Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation Ltd (IPRCL) have been engaged to develop the railway connectivity to Multi-Modal Terminal (MMT) Varanasi/Freight village with Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL). Similarly, the work of the rail connectivity with Sahibganj MMT/ICLP and Haldia MMT has also been initiated through IPRCL. The locations of the Freight Village/ICLP have the direct connectivity with the industrial corridors by road. The NW-1 has direct connectivity with the ports at Kolkata and Haldia for further integration with coastal economic zones.

On NW-2 (Brahmaputra River) in Assam, IWT terminal at Jogighopa has direct connectivity with Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP), Jogighopa, which is further connected to the gateway ports of Haldia/Kolkata through Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route.

**The Socio-economic and environmental benefits of IWT Mode:**

## 1. Cheaper operating cost and relatively lesser fuel consumption

Factors considered	Rates Considered			Source
	Waterways	Road	Rail	
Energy Consumption	0.0048 Litre/Ton Kilometre	0.0313 Litre/Ton Kilometre	0.0089 Litre/Ton Kilometre	11 <sup>th</sup> Plan Working Group Report on Shipping & IWT
Vehicle Operating Cost	0.843 Rs./Ton Kilometre	1.170 Rs./Ton Kilometre	1.009 Rs./Ton Kilometre	Planning Commission: Total Transport System (TTS) Study

## 2. Less polluting and environment friendly mode of transportation

Factor considered	Rates Considered (Rs./Ton Kilometre)			Source
	Waterways	Road	Rail	
Emission of Green House Gases (GHGs)	0.0006	0.0031	0.0006	12 <sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan

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