

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *178
ANSWERED ON 04.08.2026

UPGRADATION OF MINOR TERMINALS

*178 SHRI MILIND MURLI DEORA:

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

- (a) the steps to upgrade minor terminals and improve connectivity;
- (b) the roadmap for coastal and inland shipping strategy and State consultations;
- (c) the barriers to Indian-flagged vessels' share in EXIM cargo;
- (d) the effectiveness of Jalvahak scheme; and
- (e) the environmental safeguards in shipping expansion?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*178 ANSWERED ON 4TH AUGUST, 2026 RAISED BY
SHRI MILIND MURLI DEORA REGARDING “UPGRADATION OF MINOR
TERMINALS”.**

(a) To promote seamless passenger and vehicle movement in the inland waterways and coastal areas, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MOPSW) is focusing on the development of multi-modal/ intermodal/ inland water transport (IWT) terminals, Ro-Ro, Ro-Pax, and passenger ferry related infrastructure, along with improving multimodal connectivity between ports and hinterland areas through road, rail and inland waterway linkages. These initiatives aim to provide faster, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable transport alternatives while reducing congestion on highways and improving accessibility to coastal and island regions. Under the Sagarmala scheme, infrastructure development projects for promotion of Ro-Ro, Ro-Pax and Passenger Ferry services have been undertaken. These include construction of jetties, terminals, backwater facilities and allied landside infrastructure.

Further, Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), an autonomous organisation under MOPSW has been developing multimodal terminals, inter-modal terminals, IWT cargo and cruise terminals, Jetties, Quick Pontoon Opening Mechanism (QPOM), Lock Gates, etc. for improvement of inland waterway connectivity on National Waterways.

(b) The Government has adopted a coordinated roadmap for the promotion of coastal and inland shipping as sustainable, efficient and cost-effective modes of transport, in alignment with the provisions of the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025, Maritime India Vision 2030, Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, the National Logistics Policy and PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan. The key elements of the roadmap include:

(i) Implementation of the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025 to facilitate seamless movement of coastal cargo, simplify regulatory procedures, establish the National Database for Coastal Shipping (NDCS) and improve ease of doing business;

(ii) Preparation of a National Coastal and Inland Shipping Strategic Plan through a multi-stakeholder consultation by a Committee, with provision for periodic review and updation every two years;

(iii) Promotion of modal shift of suitable cargo from road and rail to coastal and inland waterways through policy interventions and implementation of the Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme and the Jalvahak Scheme; and

(iv) Development of coastal shipping infrastructure, including coastal berths, Ro-Ro/Ro-Pax terminals, multimodal logistics hubs, and first and last-mile connectivity, in coordination with Major Ports, State Maritime Boards and State Governments.

(c) The low share of Indian-flag vessels in EXIM cargo is primarily attributable to:

(i) Limited domestic shipping/ vessels capacity across all segments - container ships, crude tankers, LNG carriers, bulk carriers;

(ii) Higher capital and operating costs for Indian ship owners - higher financing costs and less attractive tax;

(iii) Strong competition from large foreign shipping lines which provide lower freight rates due to economies of scale; etc.

(d) The Jalvahak Scheme has enhanced the reliability of IWT through the introduction of scheduled services. Since the launch of the Scheme in December, 2024, forty (40) scheduled services have been completed on NW-1 and NW-2. As a result, 22.21 million tonne-km of cargo has been diverted from road and rail to IWT. These movements showcases increasing industry participation and reliability of IWT for regular cargo movement for commodities, namely coal, cement, gypsum, silica sand, edible oil, stone chips and other bulk cargo. Feedback received from cargo owners, namely Tata Steel, Ultratech Cement, Birla White cement, and Stone Aggregate on scheduled services has indicated that scheduled services on NW-1 and NW-2 have enhanced confidence in IWT and facilitating repeat business.

(e) The environmental safeguards applicable to shipping are implemented through the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 and the rules, notices and circulars issued thereunder, in alignment with relevant International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions and guidelines. These include measures for prevention of pollution by oil, noxious liquid substances, sewage, garbage and air emissions under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL); management of ballast water and sediments; control of ship biofouling and invasive aquatic species; regulation of anti-fouling systems; safe handling of hazardous substances; and preparedness and response to marine pollution incidents. The Directorate General of Maritime Administration ensures statutory survey, certification, inspection and compliance monitoring of Indian ships through surveys undertaken directly by its officers, wherever applicable, and through recognised organisations authorised by the Directorate. Compliance is further enforced through Flag State and Port State Control mechanisms.
