

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2196

ANSWERED ON 01.08.2025

IWAI IN VARANASI

2196. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

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

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन एवं जलमार्ग मंत्रालय

- (a) the expected economic and logistical benefits of the newly established Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) regional office in Varanasi for the region and its surrounding areas;
- (b) whether any new infrastructure projects are planned in Varanasi on accounting of the presence of this office and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the manner in which the local industries and businesses are expected to benefit from enhanced inland water transport connectivity;
- (d) the role of Indian ports in advancing India's Blue Economy Vision and contributing to the growth of maritime trade; and
- (e) whether the study conducted by the Indian Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation Limited (IPRCL) for a new rail route linking Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bhavtada via Sanchor to Kandla Port has been completed, if so, the manner in which the Government is planning to integrate this rail link with inland waterways and port infrastructure to enhance cargo transportation and trade connectivity?

ANSWER

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

- (a) The establishment of a regional office of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) in Varanasi is a strategic move aimed at streamlining Inland Water Transport (IWT) projects and enhancing coordination with the State IWT Authority. This office will enable more effective monitoring, execution, and administration of projects on National Waterways in Uttar Pradesh. It will also play a key role in unlocking the potential of water transport in the state, positioning the region as a critical hub for waterway logistics and economic development.
- (b) The details of various IWT projects planned/ongoing/completed at Varanasi are:
 - i. Multimodal Terminal, Varanasi

- ii. Development of Freight Village, Varanasi
- iii. Establishment of 6 Nos. community jetties
- iv. Establishment of Regional Centre of Excellence, Varanasi
- v. Construction of Ship Repair Facility, Varanasi
- vi. River Cruise Terminal, Varanasi
- vii. Urban Transport Project, Varanasi
- viii. Fairway Development from Varanasi to Ghazipur
- ix. Railways connectivity to Multimodal Terminal Varanasi
- x. Deployment of Hydrogen Vessel & Hybrid Electric Catamaran

(c) Waterways are more fuel-efficient compared to road and rail transport, making them a cost-effective option, particularly for bulk cargo such as coal, cement, food grains, fertilizers, stone chips, and raw materials. As per the study conducted by the World Bank, the operating cost of IWT mode is Rs. 1.2 per Ton Kilometre, Road is Rs. 2.28 per Ton Kilometre and Rail is Rs. 1.4 per Ton Kilometre. IWT provides a supplementary mode of transportation to the Local industries and businesses. IWA is providing required infrastructure, fairway and navigational aids for efficient movement of vessels from Varanasi to Haldia and then to North Eastern Region (NER) through Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route. These developmental activities are facilitating cargo and cruise movements on National Waterway -1 (River Ganga) leading to direct and indirect employment along with providing connectivity with the Gateway ports of Haldia and Kolkata. Due to these interventions, cargo movement on NW-1 has increased from 5.05 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 16.4 million tonnes in 2024-25.

(d) Indian ports play a pivotal role in realizing the Blue Economy Vision, which emphasizes sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and environmental protection. As gateways to global trade and maritime infrastructure, ports are at the heart of India's economic and geopolitical strategy in the Indian Ocean region.

(e) Indian Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation Limited (IPRCL) had conducted feasibility study covering traffic report, financial report and engineering survey report for the proposed new rail connectivity from Jaisalmer to Bhabhar via Barmer with a proposed connection to Deendayal Port, Kandla via Palanpur, Gandhidham in January, 2018 for enhancing cargo transportation and transshipment capacities. In the Report, the estimated cost of the project was Rs. 2177.01 Cr. for diesel traction and Rs. 2555.71 Cr. for electric traction. IPRCL had submitted copies of the Report to the Government of Rajasthan and Deendayal Port Authority (DPA).
