

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. \*305**  
ANSWERED ON 13.03.2026

**DREDGING ACTIVITIES UNDER NATIONAL WATERWAY - 1**

\*305. ADV PRIYA SAROJ:

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

**पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री**

- (a) the key findings of Environmental Impact Assessments conducted for dredging activities along the Ganga stretches passing through Uttar Pradesh under National Waterway-1, particularly regarding sediment balance, riverbank stability and aquatic biodiversity;
- (b) the number of instances where dredging exceeded approved depth, timing or stretch limits and the action taken against executing agencies;
- (c) whether the stretch-wise data on ecological monitoring has been conducted, if so, the details thereof, including reports of third-party audits;
- (d) whether any adverse cumulative impact has been recorded for the State of Uttar Pradesh, if so, the details thereof, district-wise;
- (e) the number of complaints received from fisher communities regarding livelihood disruption linked to dredging operations in Uttar Pradesh, district-wise; and
- (f) the specific restoration measures, compensation frameworks and scientifically defined thresholds adopted to prevent irreversible ecological damage while maintaining Least Available Depth (LAD) for navigation?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. \*305 ANSWERED ON 13.03.2026 RAISED BY ADV PRIYA SAROJ, HON'BLE M.P. REGARDING "DREDGING ACTIVITIES UNDER NATIONAL WATERWAY - 1"**

(a) Key Findings of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for Dredging Activities along the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (National Waterway-1) in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand & West Bengal regarding sediment balance, river bank stability, and aquatic biodiversity are given at Annexure. Dredging activities on NW-1 in various stretches passing through Uttar Pradesh are undertaken by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways with due diligence and in compliance with applicable environmental regulations.

(b) No such violations have been reported regarding dredging activities on NW-1 in Uttar Pradesh. IWAI maintains a robust oversight and monitoring mechanism to ensure that dredging contractors strictly adhere to approved depth, timing, and stretch limits as specified in the contractual agreements and environmental clearance conditions.

(c) IWAI undertakes ecological monitoring on NW-1 as an integral part of its environmental management obligations. Stretch-wise monitoring is conducted in accordance with the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and the conditions stipulated under the environmental clearance granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

The ecological monitoring covers the following parameters across various stretches in Uttar Pradesh:

- Water quality monitoring (physico-chemical and biological parameters)
- Aquatic fauna surveys, including cetacean population monitoring
- Riparian vegetation and bank stability assessments
- Ambient noise levels during dredging operations

The monitoring is done by the Technical Support Service Consultancy (TSSC), including National Technology Centre for Ports Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC), IIT Madras, during the execution of dredging. No separate third-party audit is conducted by IWAI.

(d) Based on the monitoring data and environmental audits conducted so far, no adverse cumulative environmental impact attributable to dredging operations of IWAI on NW-1 has been recorded in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

(e) During the dredging activities on NW-1 in Uttar Pradesh, a limited number of complaints have been received from fisher communities regarding temporary disruption to their fishing activities in certain stretches during active dredging periods. These complaints have been primarily reported from districts such as Varanasi, Ghazipur, and Prayagraj. Each complaint has been duly examined by IWAI's field offices and appropriate redressal measures, including temporary relocation of dredging operations, adequate notice to communities before dredging, and engagement with local Gram Panchayats have been undertaken.

(f) IWAI is taking up maintenance dredging in a 45 m width of the deeper portion of the river, wherever the depth is observed to be less than 3 m out of a 500 m to 5000 m width of the entire river. During the execution of this work, there is no irreversible ecological damage observed while maintaining the Least Available Depth (LAD) for navigation, following guidelines issued by MoEF&CC.

**Answered on referred to in reply to part (a) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 305 for 13/03/2026.**

Key Findings of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for Dredging Activities along the Ganga River (NW-1) in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand & West Bengal regarding sediment balance, river bank stability, and aquatic biodiversity:

**Sediment Balance**

EIAs indicate that dredging operations are confined to maintenance dredging within designated navigation channels. Dredged material is disposed of at pre-approved locations, and the overall sediment dynamics of the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System have not been adversely impacted. Periodic hydrographic surveys are conducted to monitor sediment accretion and erosion patterns. The dredging volumes are calibrated to be the minimum necessary to achieve the required Least Available Depth (LAD) for safe navigation.

**Riverbank Stability**

EIAs confirm that dredging operations are planned at safe distances from riverbanks and critical infrastructure. Geomorphological assessments have been incorporated to ensure that bank erosion risks are minimized. The channel alignment and dredging extents are designed to avoid inducing lateral migration of the river course, and real-time monitoring mechanisms are in place for early detection of any bank instability.

**Aquatic Biodiversity**

The EIAs acknowledge the ecological sensitivity of the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System, particularly with respect to the Gangetic River dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) and other protected aquatic fauna. Accordingly, dredging operations are temporally and spatially restricted during critical breeding and migration seasons. Fish ladders, resting areas, and environmentally sensitive zones have been delineated. IWAI has also engaged with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) to align waterway operations with the broader conservation goals of the National Ganga Council.

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