

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1076
ANSWERED ON 24.07.2026

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN MARITIME SECTOR

1076. SHRI TRIVENDRA SINGH RAWAT:

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

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

- (a) whether the Government is implementing an integrated action plan to expand employment opportunities in Merchant Navy/Maritime Sector for Indian youth and to promote cargo transportation and economic activities through the development of inland waterways;
- (b) if so, the details of the said action plan including the major initiatives taken and the progress achieved thereunder so far;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (d) the details of the employment generation in the Merchant Navy/Maritime Sector including the increase in cargo transportation through inland waterways as a result of the said initiatives, year-wise?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) To strengthen employment opportunities in the maritime sector, the Government has undertaken a multi-pronged strategy for capacity building. Since completion of onboard sea-time training is an essential requirement for certification and career progression, initiatives have been taken to augment training capacity, strengthen industry participation and create additional onboard training opportunities, thereby enhancing the employability of Indian maritime trainees and supporting the long-term growth of the maritime workforce. As part of these initiatives, 96 training berths have been created on the passenger vessel MV Swaraj Dweep of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration in collaboration with the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), benefiting General Purpose (GP) Rating and Certificate Course in Maritime Catering (CCMC) candidates.

To promote cargo transportation and economic activities through the development of inland waterways, Government declared 111 (5 pre-existing and 106 new) National Waterways (NWs) in the country vide National Waterways Act, 2016. Action plan for development for NWs have been drawn under Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 by the Government. Initiatives as Infrastructure and Policy measures taken to promote cargo transportation through the inland water transportation are detailed at **Annexure-1**. Due to these measures, the cargo movement on National Waterways increased from 18 million Tons in 2013-14 to 218 million Tons in 2025-26. Details of cargo transportation through inland waterways year-wise, since 2014 to 2026 and active seafarers is placed at **Annexure-2**.

Infrastructure and Policy measures taken by the Government for promotion and modernize Inland Water Transport on NWs:

1. 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) 66 community jetties, 20 floating terminals, 3 Multi-Modal Terminals (MMTs), 1 Inter-Modal Terminal (IMT) and 4 Ro-Pax terminals have been constructed on NW-1 (River Ganga) in addition to 5 pre-existing permanent terminals.

(iii) 13 floating terminals provided on NW-2 (River Brahmaputra) along with MMTs at Pandu, Jogighopa and terminals at Bogibeel and Dhubri. Four dedicated Jetties for cruise vessels have been provided at Jogighopa, Pandu, Biswanath Ghat and Neamati. In addition to this, Jetties for cruise and passengers have been constructed at Sadiya, Lyka and Orium Ghat in Assam.

(iv) 2 existing terminals at Badarpur & Karimganj on NW-16 (the Barak) have been upgraded/renovated and 1 terminal at Sonamura on river Gumati in Tripura under IBP route has been constructed.

(v) 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).

(vi) 4 floating concrete jetties were provided to Govt. of Goa and installed in Mandovi River (NW-68).

(vii) 04 Tourist Jetties on NW-4 (River Krishna) in Andhra Pradesh have been commissioned and 8 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 established.

(viii) A new Navigation Lock at Farakka and 2 Nos. Quick Pontoon Opening Mechanisms (QPOMs) have been constructed on NW-1 to facilitate smooth & faster movement of vessels.

(b) Policy Measures:

- A scheme for providing 35% incentive to promote the utilization of inland waterways transport sector by cargo owners and for scheduled service for cargo movement on NW-1 and NW-2 and NW-16 via Indo Bangladesh Protocol by Inland & Coastal Shipping Limited (ICSL) 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 implemented at a cost of INR 95.42 Crore for three years and can be scaled up or modified depending on the success of the scheme.
- 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.
- Jalyan & Navic : To increase ease of doing business in the IWT sector, along the same lines as 'vahan' and 'sarathi', a central data base and portal has been 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 – MMLP 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).
- 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.

Annexure-2

[illegible]

NW-31 (Dhansiri/Chathe)					-	-	-	-	-	-	0.01	0.00	0.00
NW-44 (Ichamati River)					-	-	0.90	0.28	0.82	0.46	0.48	0.49	0.49
NW-47 (Jalangi River)					-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.11
NW-48 (Jawai-Luni-Rann Of Kutch River)					-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.40	2.58
NW-53 (Kalyan-Thane-Mumbai Waterway, Vasai Creek And Ulhas River)					-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.70	3.23
NW-57 (Kopili River)					-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00
NW-64 (Mahanadi River)					-	-	-	-	0.01	0.45	0.67	0.40	0.47
NW-86 (Rupnarayan River)					-	-	-	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.10	0.14	0.18
NW-94 (Sone River)					-	-	0.80	-	-	-	1.16	0.97	0.05
NW-97 (Sunderbans Waterway)					-	3.22	3.46	3.86	6.10	5.47	5.19	5.98	6.36
Sub Total (National Waterways 1,2,3,4,5,16,44,64,86,94,&97)	6.89	6.52	8.14	6.53	6.46	11.38	15.30	21.22	31.24	32.41	29.34	44.91	110.70
Maharashtra Waterways		-										-	
NW-10 (Amba River)		-				2.24	2.01	17.69	20.23	28.54	30.17	29.69	31.07
NW-83 (Rajpuri Creek)		-				0.85	0.67	0.21	0.23	0.24	0.45	0.27	0.28

NW-85 (Revadanda Creek-Kundalika River System)		-				1.72	1.59	1.08	0.70	0.50	0.99	0.82	0.26
NW-91 (Shastri River - Jagad Creek System)		-				3.53	0.12	9.23	22.45	33.87	37.05	32.64	34.41
TOTAL Maharashtra Waterways	10.18	22.54	28.85	33.29	25.96	28.34	24.39	28.21	43.61	63.15	68.66	63.41	66.02
Goa Waterways												-	
NW-68 (Mandovi River)		-				1.65	1.58	4.00	2.62	2.54	2.42	2.84	5.13
NW-111 (Zuari River)		-				2.10	1.36	4.46	1.96	0.39	1.10	1.32	1.57
TOTAL Goa Waterways	1.00	0.10	4.54	15.65	11.09	3.76	2.93	8.46	4.58	2.93	3.52	4.16	6.70
Gujarat Waterways												-	
NW-73 (Narmada River)		-				0.04	0.10	0.08	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.06
NW-100 (Tapi River)		-				28.78	30.92	25.63	29.32	27.62	31.46	33.31	34.75
TOTAL Gujarat Waterways		-			11.52	28.82	31.02	25.71	29.37	27.66	31.51	33.36	34.81
Grand Total Million Tones	18.07	29.16	41.53	55.47	55.03	72.30	73.64	83.61	108.79	126.15	133.03	145.84	218.24
Year on Year Traffic Growth(%)	-	61.34	42.43	33.57	-0.79	31.38	1.85	13.54	30.13	15.95	5.45	9.63	49.64

Count of Active Seafarers up to Year 2025

Year	Distinct Count
2014	117090
2015	126945
2016	143940
2017	154349
2018	208799
2019	234886
2020	224478
2021	205787
2022	250186
2023	285454
2024	307901
2025	323429
