



Opening new world for business & employment opportunities in North-East through inland waterways

Shri Nitin Gadkari to flag off regular cargo transportation through NW 2 on River Brahmaputra tomorrow

Posted On: 28 DEC 2017 11:53AM by PIB Delhi

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation will flag off the first movement of cement cargo through National Waterway (NW) 2 on River Brahmaputra in Assam tomorrow, under the Shipping Ministry's flagship programme Sagarmala. He will also lay the foundation stone for bank protection work of Majuli Island tomorrow. Assam Chief minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, will also be present on the occasion.

Marking a new milestone towards Government of India's constant endeavors to promote economically more viable and environment friendly modes of transport in the country, two barges of 200 metric ton capacity each, will carry 400 tonnes of cement from the Inland Waterways Authority of India's Pandu Port to Dhubri covering a distance of 255 kilometers. With this, Iwai will be initiating regular cargo movement through inland waterways under the Sagarmala programme.

Transportation of cargo through NW 2 from Pandu to Dhubri will help save 150,000 tonne km of road transportation per trip and 300 km of road travel while reducing the logistics costs. Notably, where one Horse Power can move 150 kg on road and 500 kg on rail, it can move 4000 kg on waterways. Further, while one litre fuel can move 24 ton per km on road and 85 ton per km on rails, the same amount of fuel can move 105 ton per km on waterways. In addition, the infrastructural development for Inland Water Transport (IWT) requires minimal land as compared to road and rail.

Iwai will charge only Rs 318 per ton as waterway transportation charges from Pandu to Dhubri/Hatsingimari to enthruse entrepreneurs and logistic operators to shift to the cost effective and eco-friendly mode of transportation that also reduces congestion on road. Iwai has been working closely with major cement firms like Dalmia, Star and Amrit and appreciates interest shown by them in cargo movement through waterways. Efforts are on to get other cargo owners to shift their transportation to waterways as this can be a key enabler for reduction of logistics cost and open up more business & employment opportunities.

The Ministry of Shipping has been making focused efforts to:

- Connect north east region to Kolkata, Haldia, Mongla and Chittagong ports
- Provide efficient logistics in North |East region
- Set up Roll on- Roll off services across River banks
- Facilitate movement for armed forces

Development at Brahmaputra River (NW2) for commercial navigation

Pandu, due to its geographical location, is one of the key terminals on NW2. Both high & low level RCC jetties have been constructed for round the year loading and unloading of cargo and railway BG siding. The port has been developed as a multi-modal modern Inland Water Transport Terminal, equipped with cargo handling facilities, transit sheds, and appropriate open space facilities/hard stands.

Regular works of maintenance of a navigable fairway of 45 meter width and 2.5 meter least available depth (LAD) from Bangladesh Border to Neamati (629km), 2.0m LAD from Neamati to Dibrugarh (139km) and 1.5 meter LAD from Dibrugarh to Sadiya (123km)/Oriumghat (92km) have been carried out during 2016-17, with the help of river conservancy work and dredging with 3 departmental dredgers. The entire channel on NW 2 has been marked with day navigation marks. Night navigational facilities comprising of solar operated lights on beacon have been provided and maintained between Bangladesh Border and Silghat (440km), which is the last Port of Call on the Protocol route connecting Assam with Kolkata/ Haldia through Bangladesh.

Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) stations have been provided at four locations viz. Dhubri, Jogighopa, Biswanthghat and Dibrugarh for safe navigation of vessels with electronic charts. Floating terminal facilities have been provided at 12 important identified locations viz. Hatsingimari, Dhubri, Jogighopa, Pandu, Tezpur, Silghat, Biswanathghat, Neamati, Sengajan, Bogibil, Dibrugarh/Oakland and Oriumghat which will be increased as per location needs.

There has been a renewed focus in the last three years to promote IWT in North East Region (NER). Of the 106 new National Waterways that were notified in April 2016, under the National Waterways Act, 2016, 19 are in NER. Some of these are NW-16 (river Barak), NW-95 (river Subansiri), NW-39 (river Ganol), NW-93 (river Simsang), NW-101 (river Tizu and Zungki), NW-31 (Dhansiri), NW-62 (river Lohit), NW-106 (river Umngot), NW-18 (river Beki), among others.

Milestones so far:

· In January 2017, the Hon'ble Union Minister laid foundation stone for development of Lakhipur- Bhangra stretch of River Barak as National Waterway 16. The dredging of river Barak (NW-16) has been commenced in November 2017, which was flagged off from Silchar during Namami Barak event.

· The DPR for modernization of the terminals located at Karimganj and Badarpur is underway. In April 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between India and Bangladesh Government to make Ashuganj-Zakiganj stretch of River Kushiara and Sirajganj-Daikhowa stretch of River Jamuna navigable by ensuring minimum depth of 2.5 meter by dredging. On completion of the dredging work, Barak valley will be connected to National Waterway-1 and National Waterway-2 through Barak River. Simultaneously, traffic from Barak Valley will be established directly from Kolkata and Haldia ports in India and Mongla and Chittagong in Bangladesh. It is estimated that on completion of works on National Waterway-16, by 2020-21, the movement of 3 million metric tonnes of cargo per annum will be ensured. Similarly, after dredging of Sirajganj-Daikhowa stretch in Bangladesh on Indo Bangla-Protocol route approximately 6 million metric ton of cargo will be transported on National waterway-2.

· IWAI in April 2017 conducted a successful trial of transportation of eight Army trucks in Ro-Ro vessel from Pandu to Dibrugarh covering a distance of 485 KM, which was again repeated in November 2017 by transporting the same number of trucks from Pandu to Tezpur using its Ro-Ro vessel.

· In May 2017, IWAI in association with Department of North East Region (DoNER) organized a Road Show to showcase the potential for cargo and passenger transportation, primarily on River Brahmaputra. The event highlighted the enabling policies and the infrastructure facilities available to facilitate safe handling and transport of cargo on river Brahmaputra (NW-2) and river Barak (NW-16).

· In July 2017, IWAI commenced the regular (Roll-on-Roll off) Ro- Ro service between Dhubri and Hatingimari by deploying a state of the art Ro-Ro vessel MV Gopinath Bordoloi, which can carry 8 trucks and 100 passengers at a time. So far 36000 passengers and 450 trucks have been moved on this stretch in the last 6 months. This Ro-Ro crossing saves 230 Km of road travel. IWAI proposes to introduce such Ro-Ro services at other places on NW-2.

· In September 2017, Lime stone cargo was moved from Karimganj to Ashuganj in Bangladesh.

· Regular Over-Dimensional-Consignment (ODC)-Transformers of Power Grid Corporation, which cannot be transported by rail and road are taking place in Brahmaputra (NW-2). These ODCs are transported from Haldia & Kolkata to North-East through the Indo- Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route.

· River tourism is another activity which is quite popular on Brahmaputra. Two long cruise vessels MV Mahabahu and MV Charaidew are operating regularly between Saulkuchi (a place downstream of Guwahati) and Majuli carrying foreign and domestic tourists.

· IWAI has already initiated action for procurement of two more Ro- Ro vessels, having carrying capacity of 8 trucks and 100 passengers and other with carrying capacity of 12 trucks and 100 passengers. In addition, IWAI is in process of procuring four more Ro-Ro vessels to be deployed on Brahmaputra. Two tug cum barge combination and two self- propelled vessel, each having 2000 ton cargo hold are also under construction and expected to be delivered by January 2018 and March 2018 respectively. Procurement of 2 self-propelled dredgers has also been initiated.

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(Release ID: 1514434) Visitor Counter : 1640

