

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:876

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WATER TRANSPORT

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Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Waterways transportation is the cheapest mode of transport for both goods as well as passengers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of navigable rivers in the country alongwith the status of National Waterways in the country; and
- (d) the steps initiated by the Government to make rivers more navigable and encourage the use of waterways?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI MUKUL ROY)

(a)&(b): Waterways are widely recognized as cheaper mode of transport particularly for bulk goods when compared to the rail and road modes of transport. As per a 2006 report of National Council of Applied Economic Research, on an international standard, the operational cost per tonne kilometer of a barge is Rs 0.31 as compared to Rs 0.78 by rail and Rs 1.65 by road. For this, the waterways need to be developed with infrastructure, namely, navigation channel, terminals with intermodal connectivity, ware housing and navigation aids for plying of inland vessels of reasonable capacity on case to case basis.

(c): As per the report of the National Transport Policy Committee (1980), there are about 14500 km of waterways which are navigable by country boats, out of which about 5685 km of waterways are navigable by mechanized vessels.

The following waterways, totalling to 4382 km, have been declared as National Waterways (NWs): -

- (i) Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system (Allahabad-Haldia-1620 km) NW-1, declared in 1986.
- (ii) River Brahmaputra (Dhubri-Sadiya – 891 km) – NW-2 declared in 1988.
- (iii) West Coast Canal (Kottapuram-Kollam) along with Udyogmandal and Champakara Canals – (205 km) – NW-3 declared in 1993.
- (iv) Kakinada-Puducherry canals along with Godavari and Krishna rivers (1078 km) – NW-4 declared in 2008.
- (v) East Coast Canal integrated with Brahmani river and Mahanadi delta rivers (588 km) – NW-5 declared in 2008.

Of these, the NW-1, 2 & 3 are being developed for shipping and navigation by providing the required Inland Water Transport infrastructure. The developmental works include providing a navigational channel with targeted depth and width for most part of the year, aids for day and night navigation fixed/floating terminals at selected locations for berthing and loading/ unloading of vessels and intermodal connectivity at a few selected locations.

Efforts to develop commercially viable stretches of NW-4 & NW-5 under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode with Viability Gap Funding (VGF) have already been initiated on the advice of Planning Commission.

(d): For making NW-1, 2 & 3 navigable, fairway development works namely dredging and bandalling are being carried out regularly to provide and maintain targeted least available depth in various stretches thereof. Besides, various organizations controlling transportation of bulk cargo (like NTPC Ltd, Food Corporation of India, Fertilizer Companies, Cement Companies, Oil Companies, Companies engaged in construction of Hydro Power Plants etc) are being impressed upon to transport their cargo through waterways, wherever the origin and destination points are in the vicinity of NW-1, 2 and 3.