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Title:Need to provide necessary funds for development of National Waterway No. 6.

SHRI RADHESHYAM BISWAS (KARIMGANJ): Government of India announced to use and improve the waterways for transportation of various commodities as cost is much cheaper in comparison to other mode of transportation. An inland water transport protocol on transit and trade exists between India and Bangladesh under which vessels of one country can transit through the designated routes which includes the route between Karimganj and Kolkata. Two types of cargo ships ply between Kolkata and Karimganj-the smaller cargo ships can carry 500 to 600 tonnes of goods and the double cargo vessels ferry about 1500 MT. It may be mentioned here that during the British rule, the steamer navigation service company used to ply cargo ships between these two ports but such journeys came to a halt due to India-Pakistan war in 1965. It was resumed in 1972. The Government of India declared Kolkata, Karimganj, Banga and Lakhimpur stretch of river Barak in Assam as a National Waterway No. 6 with a objective to connect Panchgram Paper Mill, a unit of Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd. under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for carrying coals and other materials easily to the industry site and also to send paper products to the other parts of the country at a low cost of transportation.

In a reply to my Unstarred question number 2125 answered on 24/07/2014 by the Ministry of Shipping Government of India, it is stated that upgradation of the Karimganj terminal along with the warehouse facilities up to Lakhimpur will be done in near future.

Therefore, I request the Ministry of Shipping to provide necessary funds to develop the waterway for saving the only industry of Barak valley namely Panchgram Paper mill and for economic upliftment of this most neglected region.