

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2079
ANSWERED ON 18.03.2025

INLAND WATERWAYS AT VARANASI

2079. SMT. REKHA SHARMA:
SHRI KESRIDEVSINH JHALA:

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

- (a) the expected economic and logistical benefits for Varanasi and nearby regions from development of inland waterways;
- (b) whether there are any new infrastructure projects planned in the region;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the manner in which the local industries and businesses benefit from enhanced inland water transport?

ANSWER

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

- (a) The expected economic and logistic benefits for Varanasi and nearby regions from development of inland waterways are given in Annexure.
- (b) & (c) Yes. Details are given below;-
 - Development of Freight Village at Varanasi.
 - Creation of Rail Connectivity for Multi-Modal Terminal at Varanasi.
 - Development of World Class River Cruise Tourist Terminal at Varanasi.
- (d) The enhanced inland water transport (IWT) offers a multitude of benefits for local industries and businesses in Varanasi and its surrounding regions, details of which are given in Annexure.

Economic Benefits

- Inland Water Transport is more fuel efficient and environmental friendly mode of transport than road and rail transport, leading to lower transportation cost.
- Development of Inland Waterways provides an alternative / supplementary mode of transport for cargo and passenger movement.
- Multi Modal Terminals (MMT) at Varanasi and Community Jetties have increased accessibility to markets for hinterland populations and facilitates regional trade and commerce.
- The development of Freight Village at Varanasi aims to create hubs for storage, handling, and distribution of goods to attract investment and stimulate regional economic activity and integrate waterways with other modes of transport (road and rail), enhancing efficiency and reducing transportation costs.
- Improved waterway infrastructure leads to enhanced river tourism, attracting more visitors to Varanasi and the surrounding areas creating opportunities for businesses in the hospitality, travel, and related sectors.
- The development and operation of inland waterways creates jobs in various sectors, including transportation, logistics, construction, and tourism.

Logistical Benefits

- Modal share of shifting of freight from surface mode of transport (road/rail) to Inland Waterways at MMT Varanasi helps to reduce congestion on railways and highways.
- The development of IWT jetties and multimodal terminals at Varanasi has improved connectivity between Varanasi and other regions, facilitating the movement of goods and people.
- Inland waterways mode are well-suited for transporting bulk cargo, such as coal, cement, and agricultural products, efficiently.
- MMT Varanasi and Freight Village at Varanasi may facilitate trade by providing efficient cargo handling, warehousing and distribution. The region may attract more traders and exporter looking for cost effective transportation options.
