



IWAI Signs Key MoUs Worth ₹3,000 Crores at India Maritime Week 2025 to Boost Inland Waterways & Industrial Connectivity in the Northeast

Shri Sarbananda Sonowal Reviews Key Projects of NER, Concept Study for Approach Road Elevated Road at Bogibeel

IWAI, Assam Petro - Chemicals (APL) Join Hands to Boost Export of Methanol and Formalin via Waterways to Bangladesh & South East Asia

IWAI, Assam Govt Ink MoUs to Develop ₹1,000-Crore Water Metro Project Across Brahmaputra in Guwahati, Dibrugarh & Tezpur

IWAI, DGLL Ink MoU to Develop River Lighthouses at Bogibeel, Silghat, Biswanath Ghat and Pandu, Boost Navigation Safety on Brahmaputra

New River Terminals & Passenger Facilities to Enhance Waterway Connectivity in Mizoram

IWAI to Build Gumti–Meghna Waterway Link; Cruise Ship Project Proposed for Dumbur Lake in Tripura

Proposal Mooted for Integrated IWT Facilities on Siang River in Arunachal Pradesh

IWT Possibilities including Water Sports explored at Doyang, Noune and Shilloi Lakes in Nagaland

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The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the nodal agency for development of waterways under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), has signed two key Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to strengthen Assam's inland water transport network and industrial logistics. The agreements—one with Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd. (APL) and another with the Government of Assam—aim to promote the movement of cargo and passengers through the state's extensive river systems, advancing the goals of sustainable connectivity and regional growth.

In view of the development of multiple projects in the Northeast, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), Shri Sarbananda Sonowal chaired a comprehensive review meeting with senior officials of the ministry as well as the IWAI on all projects in Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya, including those under Central Sector Scheme (CSS).

At the IMW, the first MoU between IWAI and Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd. (APL) aims to collaborate for transportation of Methanol and Formalin through the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR) and National Waterways (NW). The initiative will facilitate exports from IWAI jetties at Bogibeel, Pandu, and Jogighopa to destinations in Bangladesh and Southeast Asia, while also strengthening domestic supply chains through National Waterways-1 and 2.

The project aligns with the Government of India's flagship initiative, PM Gati Shakti – National Master Plan for Multi-Modal Connectivity, and is expected to significantly enhance Assam's export and industrial potential. APL currently produces 1.98 lakh metric tonnes of Methanol and 1.15 lakh metric tonnes of Formalin annually, and the new arrangement will enable bulk, cost-effective, and eco-friendly transportation of these products. The total investment for the initiative is pegged at ₹400 crore, covering the procurement of tanker vessels and related infrastructure.

IWAI will provide comprehensive operational and technical support, including facilities at its Bogibeel, Pandu, and Jogighopa terminals, navigation assistance, bunkering facilities, and firefighting systems. It will also help APL develop 10 flat-bottom tanker barges with capacities between 500 and 1,000 metric tonnes. APL will coordinate logistics, vessel operations, and statutory clearances to ensure seamless cargo movement.

The second MoU, signed between IWAI and the Government of Assam, focuses on the development and promotion of an Urban Water Transport (UWT) System, or Water Metro, in Tezpur, Guwahati, and Dibrugarh. The project aims to establish a seamless and sustainable water-based mobility network along the River Brahmaputra, integrated with existing transport modes such as roads, railways, and bus systems.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal said, *"These MoUs mark a major step forward in realising the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, whose leadership continues to transform the Northeast into a hub of inland waterway connectivity and industrial opportunity. We*

remain firmly anchored in our intent to develop the inland waterways ecosystem in the region for optimum utilisation and explore possibilities and convert them into tangible opportunities that drive growth, trade, and sustainability.”

The UWT project will develop fairways, navigation aids, and passenger terminals, supported by electric hybrid passenger boats to create a modern and environmentally responsible transport system. A feasibility study is being undertaken by Kochi Metro Rail Ltd. (KMRL) in consultation with the State Government. The tentative cost of the project is estimated at ₹1,000 crore, excluding land costs.

The review meet, held at the Maritime Skill Development Centre (MSDC), focussed on 15 primary projects in progress as well as 10 Central Sector Scheme (CSS) projects including 3 in Mizoram, 2 in Nagaland, 2 in Tripura and 1 each in Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur. Two recommended new projects under CSS, one each in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, were also discussed at the event. The meeting also cleared for a Concept Study for an all weather approach road at Bogibeel for smooth passage to the Cargo-cum-Tourist terminal.

With a vision to expand river cruise tourism, the Inland Waterways Authority of India signed an agreement with Heritage River Journeys Pvt. Ltd. to develop and induct new cruise vessels and expand cruising operations on the national waterways. The partnership aims to strengthen premium tourism experiences and tap the heritage and natural appeal of the Brahmaputra and other major rivers. The value of the MoU stands at ₹500 crores.

IWAI and the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) have signed an MoU to establish a collaborative framework aimed at enhancing river navigation safety and promoting tourism along National Waterway 2 (NW-2) in Assam. The partnership envisions the development and establishment of river lighthouses and allied infrastructure at Bogibeel, Silghat, Biswanath Ghat, and Pandu, which will serve as vital aids to navigation and help ensure safer passage for vessels operating along the Brahmaputra. The MoU exchange aims to unlock the tourism potential of river lighthouses by promoting them as hubs for eco-tourism and heritage tourism.

A landmark MoU with Rhenus Logistics at ₹1,000 crores will enable induction of modern tug-barges on the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers, significantly enhancing cargo transportation capacity and improving multimodal logistics efficiency for the Northeast. In addition, for the development of cruise terminals at Neamati, Silghat, Biswanath Ghat and Guijan, an investment of ₹299 crore has been earmarked.

For the development of the Regional Centre of Excellence in Dibrugarh with a project value of ₹188 crore, alongside a ₹55 crore plan for developing a key land parcel in Guwahati, two other MoUs were also signed. These projects, supported through consultant engagement by IPRCL, mark a transformative phase in Assam's river economy and position the state as a major hub of inland waterways connectivity and cruise tourism in India.

“Our collaboration to export products to neighbouring markets and the creation of a Regional Centre of Excellence in Dibrugarh reflect our commitment to innovation and global integration. Guided by the visionary leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi, we are transforming our waterways into engines of growth, prosperity and pride — reshaping the future of the Northeast,” said Shri Sarbananda Sonowal.

In Mizoram, IWAI is advancing key inland water transport projects in Mizoram to strengthen regional connectivity and river-based mobility. Study is underway for IWT infrastructure on the Tlawng River and the Chhimtuipui River, with project values of ₹0.89 crore and ₹1.42 crore respectively. Additionally, construction work has commenced under Stage-I of the ₹9.82-crore project for developing IWT infrastructure on the Khawthlangtuipui–Tuichawng stretch in Lunglei district. The project includes two river terminals at Thekaduar and Tlabung, two HDPE floating jetties with floating gangways, and new passenger boats equipped with outboard jets, enabling safer and more efficient passenger movement in the region.

In Nagaland, IWAI is preparing DPRs for developing Inland Water Transport facilities at *Doyang* Lake and for promoting water sports and tourism at *Noune* and *Shilloi* Lakes under CSS. In Manipur, a Techno-Economic Feasibility study and DPR has been proposed for developing IWT on the Barak River and its tributaries, as well as the Imphal and Nambul rivers in Manipur under the CSS. In Meghalaya, DPR for developing IWT infrastructure on Umiam Lake and the Umngot River (NW-106) are being conducted.

In Tripura, IWAI is advancing two key initiatives to strengthen regional connectivity and tourism. A project valued at ₹24.53 crore has been taken up to develop the *Gumti River* and establish navigational linkage with the *Meghna* river system in Bangladesh. The project includes development of a navigational channel, bank protection works, construction of nine floating pontoon terminals, and installation of navigational aids. Additionally, study is going on for the introduction of a cruise ship service on *Dumbur Lake* in Dhalai district aimed at boosting tourism and leisure-based river travel in the state.

A proposal has been initiated for the development of Inland Water Transport (IWT) infrastructure on the *Siang* River in Arunachal Pradesh. The project includes construction of terminals with associated facilities such as buildings, sheds, internal roads, pathways, fencing, wharves, and solar infrastructure, along with installation of floating jetties, fairway development and navigational aids. The proposal also includes provision of vessels such as ferry services, FRP boats and high-speed leisure boats to support passenger mobility and tourism.

“The ongoing projects across Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh reflect the commitment of Modi Govt to transform the region through modern IWT infrastructure. By enhancing river connectivity, tourism and trade corridors, we are unlocking new economic opportunities and integrating the region more closely with national and international markets. Under the dynamic leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Northeast is entering a new era of connectivity and economic resurgence powered by the revival of our mighty rivers. We aim to invest more than ₹5,000 crores for the development of IWT in the region in the coming years. With new partnerships to strengthen cargo movement, river tourism and cross-border trade, Inland Waterways are becoming a lifeline of opportunity for our people,” said Shri Sarbananda Sonowal.

The initiatives represent a pivotal step in operationalising the vast potential of the inland waterways and rivers of the region as engines of economic transformation.



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