



Uttar Pradesh Accelerates Inland Waterways Expansion with Major MoUs Signed at India Maritime Week 2025

IWAI Signs MoUs worth More than ₹6,000 Crores Inland Waterways Expansion on Ganga (NW 1)

IWAI signs MoUs with UP Govt for New Cruise Vessels, Ship Repair Facility and Electric Charging Infrastructure along NW 1

Two New River Cruise Terminals and a Regional Centre of Excellence to be established in Varanasi

Heritage River Journeys and Alaknanda Cruises to Expand Cruise Operations on NW-1 in partnership with IWAI and the UP Govt

MoU worth ₹1,000 Crores signed with Rhenus for inducting Tug-Barges for Cargo movement in Ganga (NW1) and Brahmaputra (NW2)

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Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the nodal agency under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) for development of waterways in the country, made major announcements for development and stepping up Uttar Pradesh's inland waterways network, signing key agreements at India Maritime Week 2025 (IMW). IWAI signed MoUs worth more than ₹6,000 crores for development and expansion of Inland Waterways network on river Ganga (NW 1).

The MoUs aim at strengthening river cruise tourism, ship repair infrastructure, multimodal connectivity and clean-energy transportation along National Waterway-1 (Ganga). IWAI announced an investment boost of ₹1,350 crore to accelerate inland water transport and river cruise infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh, following the signing of MoUs during IMW 2025.

As part of the nationwide push that saw 25 MoUs inked to boost inland waterways development, Uttar Pradesh secured major commitments focused on expanding operations in Varanasi and along the Ganga corridor. IWAI signed an agreement with Heritage River Journeys Pvt. Ltd. to develop, induct new cruise vessels and expand cruise tourism on national waterways. Another pact with Alaknanda Cruises will support the operation of cruise vessels on NW-1, enhancing premium river tourism and heritage circuits in Varanasi. A total of more than **₹800 crores** have been earmarked for these.

In a move that is expected to position Uttar Pradesh as a regional maritime services hub, IWAI entered into an MoU with UP government for the development of a new ship repair facility in Varanasi, providing critical infrastructure and utilities support, with an investment of **₹350 crores**. Two new river cruise terminals, with an investment of **₹200 crores**, will also be developed in Varanasi, improving passenger comforts and operational capacity at one of India's fastest-growing cruise tourism destinations.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said the agreements reflect India's commitment to modernising its river systems. *"These MoUs demonstrate how inland waterways are emerging as engines of growth, tourism and regional integration,"* Sonowal said, calling the development a transformative moment for India's maritime future.

To promote clean and sustainable river mobility, the state approved a project for electric vessel charging infrastructure, aligning with India's National Green Shipping Mission and the vision for low-emission river transport. A **₹100 crore** MoU will enable rollout of electric charging infrastructure for vessels, supporting the National Green Shipping Mission.

Sarbananda Sonowal further said, *"As a result of the transformational policies initiated under the visionary leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the IWT sector has experienced an unprecedented surge in terms of trade and transport since 2014. Continuing on this, these MoUs affirm India's commitment to building world-class waterway infrastructure while ensuring inclusive, sustainable, and technology-driven growth. Each agreement aligns with our goal to make India a global maritime hub by 2047."*

Another **₹200 crore** initiative to establish a Regional Centre of Excellence (RCoE) in Varanasi, focused on skill development. The new RCoE will promote research, skills training and innovation in inland water transport operations, vessel design and green technologies. 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.

Sarbananda Sonowal further said, *"These initiative gives practical shape to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Transformation through Transportation as India sails towards becoming a Viksit Bharat. This will strengthen our logistics ecosystem but also open new avenues for trade, tourism, and regional integration. Together, let us reaffirm our commitment as partners in progress, stewards of our waterways, and architects of a future where the Inland Water Transport sector truly knows no bounds."*

A sum of **₹1,500 crores** has been earmarked under the MoU signed between IWAI and NTCPWC of IIT Madras for dredging works supervision on NW1 (Ganga). To accelerate the vision of PM Gati Shakti, rail connectivity for the Multi-Modal Terminals at Varanasi, Sahibganj & Haldia is being

proposed. This initiative will be undertaken through an MoU signed between IWAI & IPRCL for preparing the DPR & PMC services, at ₹1,500 crore investment.

Speaking on the occasion, **Minister of State for MoPSW, Shantanu Thakur** said the partnerships in Uttar Pradesh will strengthen electric vessel infrastructure, ship repair capability and training ecosystems. *“These initiatives build a holistic, future-ready inland waterway network that supports green growth and economic opportunity. Thanks to our dynamic PM Narendra Modi ji for placing unwavering focus on the revival of inland waterways and empowering Uttar Pradesh to become a major centre of river-based connectivity and growth. It is his visionary leadership that has transformed long-pending ideas into reality, turning the Ganga into a powerful corridor for trade, mobility and tourism,”* said **Shantanu Thakur**.

Secretary of MoPSW Vijay Kumar added that the combined agreements reinforce India’s goal of a resilient maritime economy driven by innovation, investment and sustainability.

The **IWAI Chairman (I/C), Sunil Kumar Singh** said the MoUs would significantly accelerate the development of the inland water transport ecosystem in Uttar Pradesh, enhancing seamless connectivity along the Ganga and advancing the state’s role in sustainable river logistics and cruise tourism.

With the strategic expansion of NW-1 operations, Uttar Pradesh is set to play a central role in India’s multimodal logistics and river tourism landscape, complementing national programs such as Sagarmala, **Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV2030)** and the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 (MAKV2047)**.





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