

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3441
ANSWERED ON 07.08.2026

MAINTENANCE OF NAVIGABLE DEPTH IN WATERWAYS

3441. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY:

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

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

- (a) whether the Government has entered into joint agreements/operational frameworks between the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) to maintain navigable depths across major channels and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the total number of specialized shallow-depth dredgers deployed, capital dredging contracts executed and cargo channels kept open country-wide, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the specific progress achieved, volume of river sediment cleared and Least Available Depth (LAD) maintained along National Waterway-1 particularly in the State of Bihar;
- (d) the details of the operational frameworks used to include long-term fairway development contracts and river training measures to ensure safe round-the-year navigation; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken steps to introduce high-capacity dredging tech, scale up operations into tributary rivers and prevent traffic disruptions for commercial and cruise vessels and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a) The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/ operational frameworks has been signed between the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and the Dredging Corporation of India Limited (DCI) to maintain navigable depths in navigation channels of National Waterway (NW)-1 (Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River system), NW-2 (Brahmaputra River) & NW-16 (Barak River), details of which are given at **Annexure**.

(b) At present, a total of 34 shallow-depth dredgers have been deployed to carry out maintenance dredging as per details given below:

(i) NW-1: End-to-end fairway development is being undertaken through contract dredging to ensure the required navigational depth for safe and efficient vessel movement. 17 dredgers deployed through dredging contract agencies and 7 departmental dredgers are engaged for maintenance dredging on NW-1.

(ii) NW-2 and NW-16: For maintenance of navigable channels of the required navigational depth, a total of 07 dredgers are deployed in the North Eastern Region, with 05 dredgers deployed on NW-2 and 02 dredgers on NW-16 under contract with DCI.

(iii) NW-3 (West Coast Canals in Keralam): The work for dredging and widening of narrow canals in the stretch between Edapallikota and Kollam on NW-3 has been taken up through contract by deployment of 1 private dredger. In addition, 02 departmental dredgers have been deployed for maintenance dredging at various locations in NW-3 in Keralam.

(c) Dredging works on NW-1 are being undertaken in a phased manner from Tribeni to Varanasi to facilitate maintenance of navigable fairways. In the stretch from Tribeni to Barh, dredging is being carried out under Assured Depth Contracts for maintaining a Least Available Depth (LAD) of 3.0 m, while in the stretch from Barh to Varanasi, dredging is being undertaken under Quantity-Based Contracts for maintaining a minimum LAD of 2.5 m. Under the Quantity-Based Dredging Contracts, 42.68 lakh cubic metres of sediment has been dredged, of which 22.81 lakh cubic metres pertains to the stretch falling in Bihar.

(d) IWAI follows a long-term, reach-specific fairway development framework on NW-1 based on hydrographic surveys, river morphology and traffic requirements. The framework includes performance-based and quantity-based dredging contracts, supported by river conservancy measures such as bandalling, channel training and deployment of navigational aids, wherever technically feasible. The strategy is reviewed periodically to optimise interventions in accordance with river behaviour and environmental safeguards, with the objective of facilitating safe and reliable navigation throughout the year. The fairway development contracts have been given for three years with the provision to extend the same for another two years.

(e) IWAI has adopted specialised shallow-draft dredgers, modern hydrographic survey systems and continuous channel monitoring for maintenance of navigable fairways. Dredging operations are planned and prioritised based on navigational requirements and prevailing river conditions, including in tributary waterways wherever required. Considering the dynamic morphology, seasonal sedimentation and environmentally regulated stretches of alluvial rivers, dredging operations are undertaken in a calibrated manner to minimise disruption to commercial and cruise vessel movement while ensuring sustainable river management.

Annexure

MoU/ Operational frameworks signed between the IWAI and DCI to maintain navigable depths

National Waterway (NW)	Details of MoUs
1. NW -1	The fairway development work for maintaining the Haldia Access Channel to the Multimodal Terminal Haldia has been entrusted by the Inland Waterways Authority of India to the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMPK). Further, under the operational arrangement between SMPK and the DCI, maintenance dredging is being executed by DCI under supervision and monitoring of SMPK.
2. NW - 2 and other NWs in the North Eastern Region (NER)	Pursuant to the MoU, IWAI awarded dredging works to DCI for a period of three years for maintenance of the fairway through dredging in the stretches from Bangladesh Border to Jogighopa and Jogighopa to Pandu on NW-2, and Bhanga to Badarpur on NW-16.
