



India's First Riverine Lighthouses to Come Up on Brahmaputra (NW-2) as Sarbananda Sonowal Lays Foundation Stones

Pandu, Bogibeel, Silghat & Biswanath Ghat to station country's First Riverine Lighthouses

DGLL, in collaboration with IWAI, to build Four Lighthouses with an investment of ₹84 crores

“Brahmaputra's Lighthouses to Serve as Beacons for Safer Navigation and New Tourist Attractions”: Sarbananda Sonowal

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India took a pioneering step in inland waterway navigation as **Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Sarbananda Sonowal** laid the foundation stones for four river lighthouses along the banks of the Brahmaputra River, marking the first time lighthouse infrastructure will be established on an inland waterway in the country. The ceremony, held at Lachit Ghat, Guwahati, was jointly organised by the **Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL)** and the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**, under the aegis of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**.

The four sites — Bogibeel in Dibrugarh district, Pandu in Kamrup (Metro) district, Silghat in Nagaon district, all along the south bank of the river, and Biswanath Ghat in Biswanath district, the only one in the north bank, — are located at strategic points along Brahmaputra (National Waterway-2), one of India's most important inland cargo and passenger corridors. The combined project outlay for all four lighthouses stands at approximately ₹84 crore. Each lighthouse will rise to 20 metres with a geographical range of 14 nautical miles and a luminous range of 8–10 nautical miles, powered entirely by solar energy. Alongside navigation infrastructure, every site will feature a museum, amphitheatre, cafeteria, children's play area, souvenir shop and landscaped public spaces, positioning each lighthouse as a tourism landmark as well as a functional maritime asset.

The commissioning of river lighthouses on NW-2 is a direct response to a 53 percent surge in cargo movement on the Brahmaputra waterway in the financial year 2024–25, as recorded by IWAI. Cargo traffic on NW-2 has been growing consistently and the Brahmaputra corridor is now integral to supply chains serving Assam's tea, coal and fertiliser industries, in addition to carrying passenger and tourism traffic. The new lighthouses will enable 24×7 safe navigation, accommodate weather observation sensors and provide the navigational infrastructure necessary for the sustained growth of both freight and passenger movement on the river.

“Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, inland waterways are not merely an alternative to roadways and railways but they are being energised and enabled as force multiplier for our economy. A tonne of freight moved by water costs a fraction of what road transport demands, generates a fraction of the carbon, and frees our highways for passengers and time-sensitive goods. These lighthouses on the Brahmaputra are a statement of intent: that India’s rivers are open for business, round the clock,” said **Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**.

The foundation stone ceremony was attended by **Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Minister of Tourism, Government of Assam; Charan Boro, Minister of Transport, Government of Assam; Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister of Public Health Engineering, Government of Assam; Bijuli Kalita Medhi, Member of Parliament, Guwahati; and Siddhartha Bhattacharya, MLA, East Guwahati**. Senior officials present included **Vijay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**, and **N. Muruganandam, Director General, DGLL**.

“Waterways offer a decisive cost advantage. Moving a tonne of cargo by inland waterway costs roughly one-third of road transport and half of rail. For a region like Northeast India, where road infrastructure is perpetually under pressure from both traffic and terrain, activating the Brahmaputra as a full-scale freight corridor is not a choice but a necessity,” Sonowal added.

The project was conceived following an initiative by the Minister's Office to explore the feasibility of river lighthouses in the Northeast. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IWAI and DGLL was signed on April 8, 2025, covering all four sites. Sites were formally transferred to DGLL under Right of Use agreements executed in June 2025, after a technical proposal placed before the Central Advisory Committee for Aids to Navigation. Each lighthouse is scheduled for completion within 24 months of award of contract, following geotechnical investigation, topographic survey and detailed design.

“As traffic on NW-2 grows, the environmental and congestion benefits compound — fewer emissions, less road wear, lower accident risk, and a more resilient supply chain for the Northeast. The Deepstambh lighthouses will make night navigation safe and reliable, removing the single largest barrier to round-the-clock waterway operations,” added **Sonowal**.

The Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL), under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, is the statutory authority responsible for providing aids to navigation across India's 11,098 kilometre coastline and now its inland waterways. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) administers and develops India's network of national waterways, which spans over 20,000 kilometres, managing infrastructure, terminals and navigational facilities to enable cargo and passenger movement across the country's rivers, backwaters and creeks.

NW-2 connects Assam's Dhubri to Sadiya across a navigable length of 891 kilometres — the longest navigable stretch of any Indian waterway — passing through the heart of India's Northeast. The four lighthouses mark the beginning of what MoPSW describe as a wider programme to equip India's inland waterways with the same navigational safety infrastructure that has long governed its coasts.





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