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## Survey completed for Cruise Operations across Varanasi & Prayagraj | Uttar Pradesh | 24 Apr 2023

### Why in News?

On 23 April 2023, the Director of the Inland Waterways Authority of India, L. K. Rajak informed that the Inland Waterways Authority of India has completed the survey between Varanasi-Prayagraj for the operation of cruise service under PM Gati Shakti Yojana.

### Key Points

- L.K. Rajak said that preparations are on to start in July. If the trial is successful, the number of vessels on this route will be increased. Along with this, there is also a plan to operate cargo ships.
- The cruise plying between Varanasi and Prayagraj will take the tourists to Ganga Darshan as well as visit tourist places.
- In this survey, the obstacles to water transport have been identified in many places. Along with this, jetties will also be constructed at tourist places including Chunar, Vindhyachal, and Sitamarhi. After the success of this experiment, the Waterways Authority will also increase cruise services.
- To promote religious tourism, the Waterways Authority is engaged in preparing a new route connecting all the tourist places between Prayagraj and Varanasi. There is a plan to operate the one-way journey through PPP mode (Public Private Partnership), which will be completed from morning till evening.
- For this, many private companies have also shown interest in the scheme. In this, after the selection of the private company, a decision will be taken on the rent and other facilities. In this, by constructing jetties from Varanasi to Chunar, Vindhyachal, Sitamarhi and Prayagraj, arrangements will be made to stay here.
- The Waterways Authority will share its action plan with the local administration for the development of tourism facilities at these places. In fact, under the PM Gati Shakti Yojana, Ganga Ghats will also be developed to reach Chunar Fort, Maa Vindhyavasini Dham and the place where Sita resided, through new cruise operations between Varanasi and Prayagraj.
- Under the PM Gati Shakti Yojana, Varanasi is being made a new centre of waterways. There is a plan to connect Ramnagar Multimodal Terminal by road. The cargo vessel is already operating from Varanasi to Haldia. Varanasi has been connected to the world's longest river route through Ganga Vilas Cruise. Preparations are being made to develop Varanasi as a hub through cruise operations till Prayagraj.