



News Regional Office of Inland Waterways Authority

Why in News?

The [Inland Waterways Authority of India \(IWAI\)](#) upgraded its sub-office in **Varanasi** into a regional office to effectively implement [Inland Water Transport \(IWT\)](#) activities on [National Waterway-1 \(NW-1\)](#) along the [River Ganga](#).

Key Points

- **IWAI Regional Offices:**
 - The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) operates under [the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways](#).
 - It currently has **five regional offices in Guwahati (Assam), Patna (Bihar), Kochi (Kerala), Bhubaneswar (Odisha), and Kolkata (West Bengal)**.
 - The newly established regional office in **Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)**, becomes the **sixth**.
 - The Varanasi office will **manage operations over a 487-kilometre stretch from Majhua to the Varanasi Multi-Modal Terminal (MMT)** and up to Prayagraj.
 - It will **also oversee works related to other National Waterways (NWs)** in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP):**
 - The office will prioritize implementing [the World Bank](#)-supported [Jal Marg Vikas Project \(JMVP\)](#).
 - It aims to **enhance the capacity of River Ganga (NW-1)** through:
 - **River conservancy works** such as bandalling and maintenance dredging.
 - Construction of key infrastructure, including MMTs at **Varanasi, Sahibganj, and Haldia**, an intermodal terminal at Kalighat, and a new navigational lock at Farakka (West Bengal).
 - **Promoting cruise tourism** and seamless cargo movement along the waterway.
 - **Development of Community Jetties:**
 - Under JMVP, **60 community jetties** are being constructed across four states: **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal**.
 - These jetties **aim to benefit local commuters**, small and marginal farmers, artisans, and fishing communities.
 - The Varanasi Regional Office will monitor and ensure efficient execution of these activities.
- **National Waterways in Uttar Pradesh:**
 - Uttar Pradesh has around **30 rivers, with 10 declared as National Waterways**.
 - The office will oversee development works on [River Ganga](#) and its tributaries, including [Betwa, Chambal, Gomti, Tons, Varuna, Gandak, Ghagra, Karamnasa, and Yamuna](#).

Inland Waterways Authority of India

- It **came into existence on 27th October 1986** for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It primarily undertakes **projects for development and maintenance of IWT infrastructure** on

national waterways through grants received from the **Ministry of Shipping**.

Inland Water Transport (IWT)

▪ About:

- Inland water transport refers to the transportation of people, goods, and materials via waterways such as **rivers, canals, lakes, and other navigable bodies of water** that are located within a country's boundaries.
- IWT is the **most economical mode of transportation**, especially for bulk cargo like coal, iron ore, cement, food grains and fertilizer. Presently, it remains **underutilized at a share of 2% in India's modal mix**.

▪ Socio-Economic Benefits of IWT:

- Cheaper operating cost and relatively lesser fuel consumption
- Less polluting mode of transportation
- Lesser requirement of land relative to other modes of transportation
- More environment friendly mode of transportation
- Moreover, waterways can be **used for recreational purposes such as boating and fishing**.

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