

Uttar Pradesh govt to leverage network of rivers for cargo movement

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Representative Picture

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The Uttar Pradesh government will leverage the network of rivers for low-cost passenger and cargo movement in a bid to achieve merchandise exports of Rs 3 trillion in 2-3 years, officials said.

According to experts, since inland waterway terminals are directly connected with sea-ports and dry-ports, they could play a vital role as cheaper transport mediums to boost exports of perishable and non-perishable items at reduced costs.

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Of the 111 inland waterways in India, UP has a dozen waterways in major rivers including the Ganga, Yamuna, Saryu, Betwa and Chambal.

Currently, the Varanasi-Haldia inland waterway, operated by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), is operational in UP.

The [Yogi Adityanath](#) government intends to harness the potential of cargo movement through inland waterways to boost exports of farm and dairy produce, as well as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) items.

The state is now exploring to develop/redevelop other waterways to facilitate passenger and cargo movement since they offer economical routes for intrastate and interstate transportation with little investment.

Meanwhile, the state has said that it would constitute UP Inland Waterways Authority to catalyse the movement of cargo and passengers apart from water sports and tourism.

“The authority will promote water transport and trade, and offer a viable medium to export the state’s products to other states and countries,” UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath said.

The authority would be headed by the UP transport minister with domain experts as members. The proposal will be tabled before the state legislature in the forthcoming Assembly session beginning November 28.

In India, inland waterways cargo movement increased from 16 million tonnes (MT) in 2016 to 109 MT in 2021-22. While the operational cost of waterways is much lower compared to train and road transport, it is ecologically amenable too.

In fact, UP has earmarked Rs 55,000 crore for investing in transport infra projects including roads, expressways and metro rails in the year 2023-24. This is in line with UP’s goal of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2027.