

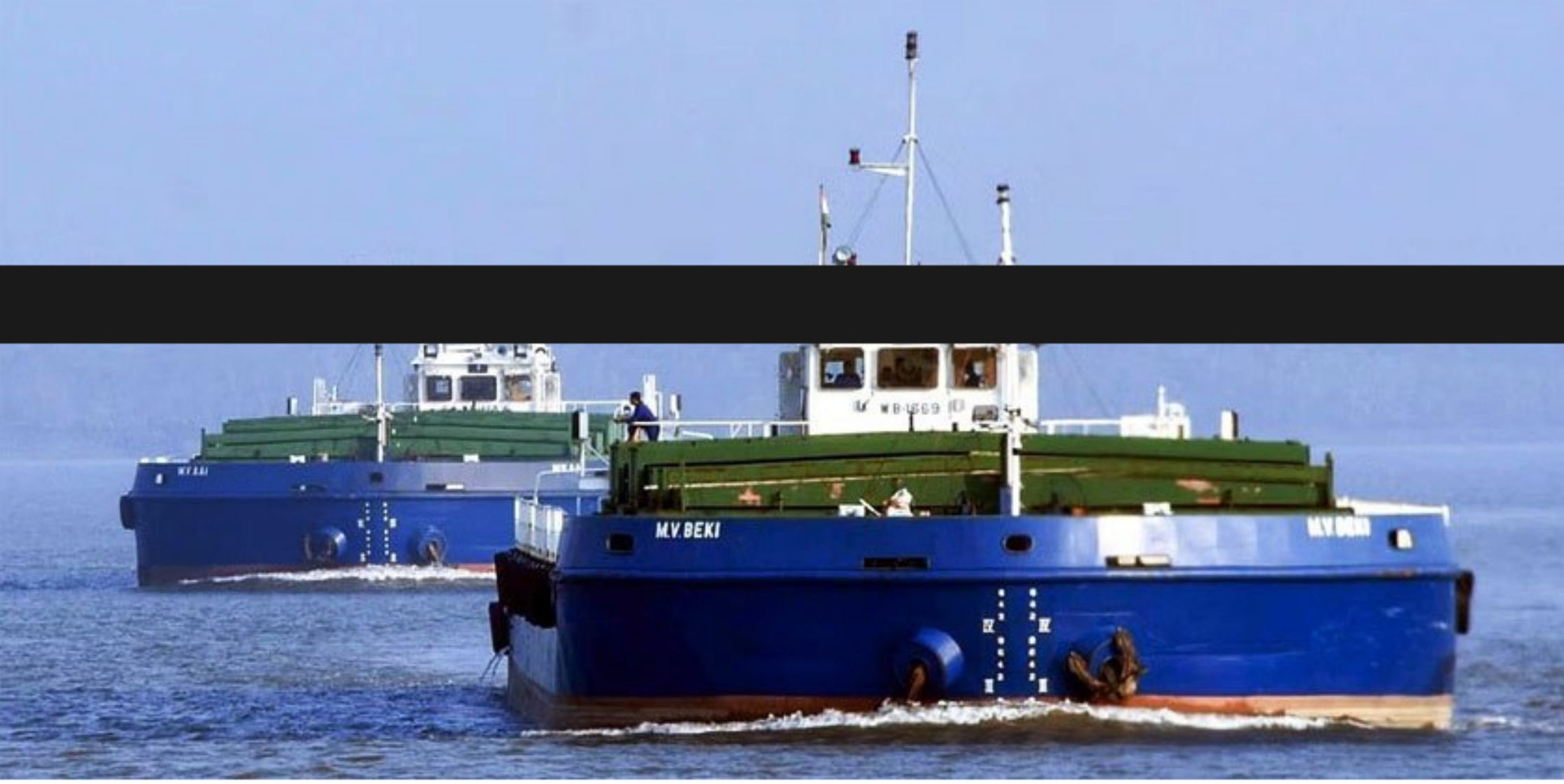
# India’s Inland Waterways Experience Robust Growth With Steady Infrastructure Development

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India’s inland waterways have been in focus for quite some time now and the Government of India, via the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has invested significantly in its development. As a fruit of this perseverance, the Inland Waterways sector witnessed a remarkable 16% year-on-year surge in traffic during the fiscal year 2022-23, reaching a substantial 126.15 million tonnes compared to the previous fiscal’s 108.79 million tonnes. This growth indicates the sector’s slow but steady expansion, reflecting strategic operational enhancements and the establishment of new waterways.



waterways became operational in the past fiscal year, spanning across Assam, Odisha, and Kerala – the NW-14 and NW-23 in Odisha, covering rivers Baitarini and BudhaBalagna; the

NW-8 and NW-9 in Kerala, encompassing the Alappuzha – Kottayam Athirampuzha Canal and the Alappuzha – Changanassery Canal; and the NW-31 in Assam along the Dhansiri River. Together, these notable waterways have facilitated a cumulative cargo movement of 0.09 million tonnes. The MoPSW has also allocated over INR 6,600 crore for the development of national waterways, which includes funds for establishing 5 new routes.

Notably, the highest traffic movements were reported along the Shastri River-Jaigad Creek stretch of NW-91, and the Amba River stretch across NW-10, both in Maharashtra. According to Union Minister Sarbanada Sonowal’s written response in Parliament, NW-91 observed a remarkable 52% year-on-year growth, with 33.87 million tonnes of cargo movement in FY23. Simultaneously, the Amba

movement.

India presently boasts 111 National Waterways, including five existing and 106 newly declared ones spread across 24 states. Feasibility studies for new national waterways have been completed, leading to the formulation of an action plan for creating the 26 most viable waterways based on study reports.



Investments in inland waterways have been substantial, with INR 6639.27 crore allocated for the augmentation of existing and new waterways development, including jetties to improve navigation facilities. The Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP I & II) along the Varanasi-Haldia stretch of NW-1 has received ₹5362.27 crore, covering four states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.

Furthermore, a comprehensive development plan amounting to INR 474 crore has been allocated for NW-2 along the Brahmaputra River in Assam. An additional INR 388 crore, split into INR 208 crore and INR 180 crore, has been earmarked for the development of a ship repair facility and an alternative road at Pandu Port in Assam. Another INR 148 crore has been allocated for the comprehensive development of NW-16 along the river Barak, especially focusing on the Indian portion of the India–Bangladesh route passing through Assam.

This consistent growth plan for India’s inland waterways signals a promising trajectory for the sector, backed by strategic investments and development initiatives of the Government.

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