

Gomti in focus as UP plans river transport

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LUCKNOW: The first meeting of the Uttar Pradesh Inland Waterways Authority on Tuesday outlined a clear roadmap to start and expand water-based transport across the state.

The authority decided to appoint a consultant to prepare a detailed feasibility study for launching water transport on major rivers in the first phase.

The Gomti river was highlighted as a potential priority stretch, subject to adequate cleaning and depth.

The meeting also strongly recommended introducing water metro services in Lucknow, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Ayodhya, Agra and Mathura.

"At the board meeting of the authority, a decision was taken to appoint a consultant to carry out a feasibility study of major rivers to start water-based transport services and tourist activities there as soon as possible," minister of state for transport (Independent charge) Daya Shankar Singh said.

"The possibility of introducing a water metro in some cities was also discussed," he added.

Earlier, addressing the conclave, the minister who has been appointed chairman of the

UP Inland Waterways Authority, said inland water transport represented a major opportunity for Uttar Pradesh, which has 11 of India's 111 notified inland waterways.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) chairman Sunil Paliwal said Prime Minister Narendra Modi have given high priority to inland waterway development over the past decade.

Former IWAI chairman and ex-secretary TK Ramachandran said one cargo vessel could carry the load of 50-60 trucks, dramatically reducing logistics costs.

Senior divisional railway manager Rajneesh Srivastava said India was developing a multimodal cargo system integrating water, road and rail transport. This will lower logistics costs for routes such as Varanasi-Kolkata.

He added that industries in Kanpur and Unnao would also benefit from cheaper cargo movement.

Tourism director general Rajesh Kumar said Uttar Pradesh had vast untapped tourism potential, especially through water transport.

Under the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy 2025, investors in floating restaurants are eligible for 25% subsidy.