

IWAI Turns Aggregator for Cargo Owners and Shippers; Launches Dedicated Portal

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) yesterday launched a dedicated portal to connect cargo owners and shippers with real time data on availability of vessels. The landmark e-connect measure will enable direct interaction among the vessel operators, shippers and cargo owners as currently, there is no platform to know the availability of vessels in the market. It has been designed and developed by the in-house IT Department and the Traffic Wing of IWAI as part of its preparedness for optimal use of its ongoing capacity development on various National Waterways.

Named as the Forum of Cargo-Owners and Logistics-Operators (FOCAL), the link of the portal is available on the Homepage of IWAI website www.iwai.nic.in. Launching the portal. IWAI chairperson Ms Nutan Guha Biswas said, the step is in line with IWAI's commitment to promote Inland Water Transport (IWT) in India by way of critical interventions, both physical and in the form of creating intellectual property.

FOCAL will facilitate responses from the logistic operators against the requirement raised by cargo owners and vice-versa. The users can register on the portal to key in the availability and details of vessels or the available cargo, as the case may be. Cargo owners will be able to put details like the origin, destination, type of cargo etc.

In its role as a facilitator and now aggregator, IWAI, that owns a limited number of vessels itself, has been doing pilot movements to establish technical and commercial viability of IWT. The Government is developing National Waterways as a key transport intervention, as part of an integrated transport network strategy, which will help correct the transport modal mix that imposes huge logistics costs on the Indian economy. At present the cost of logistics in India, at 15 per cent of GDP, is about twice those in the United States.

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