

## Bihar's capital Patna on board the game-changing container cargo circuit on Inland Waterways

In a first for the city, IWAI vessel reached Gaighat terminal carrying container cargo from Kolkata along river Ganga

Patna and upcoming IWAI terminal at Kalughat to emerge as new hub for trade up to Nepal with river Gandak announced as National Waterway 37

Patna witnessed a new landmark in India's Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector with 16 TEUs of container cargo (equivalent to 16 truckloads) belonging to food giants PepsiCo India and Emami Agrotech Ltd from Kolkata reaching the city's Gaighat IWT terminal on river Ganga late evening on Friday.

The 815 kms long voyage was a momentous one with the opening up of Kolkata-Patna as a new Origin-Destination pair on Inland Waterways.

Earlier, on November 12, 2018, Honble Prime Minister had received the country's first IWT containerised cargo that reached Varanasi from Kolkata.

Plans are at an advanced stage to operationalise Patna-Varanasi sector of NW-1 for container cargo movement. Container cargo transport comes with several inherent advantages. Even as it reduces the handling cost, allows easier modal shift, reduces pilferages and damage, it also enables cargo owners to reduce their carbon footprints.

The Ministry of Shipping is developing NW-1 (River Ganga) under Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) from Haldia to Varanasi (1390 Km) with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank at an estimated cost of Rs 5369 crore. The project would enable commercial navigation of vessels with capacity of 1500-2,000 DWT.

The movement will give a fillip to the region's growth and employment. According to the World Bank economic analysis, of the 1.5 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities to be created due to interventions under JMVP, 50,000 will be in Bihar alone.

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(Release ID: 1556043)