

World Bank Approves \$ 375 Million Loan for Developing National Waterway-1

In a major boost towards realising country's ambitious inland waterways project, the World Bank has approved a \$375 million loan for capacity augmentation of National Waterway-1(River Ganga) under Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP).

The government is developing NW-1 (River Ganga) under 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.

Under the project, there are going to be three multi-modal terminals--one each at Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Sahibganj (Jharkhand), and Haldia (West Bengal), two inter-modal terminals- at Kalughat and Ghazipur, a new Navigation Lock at Farakka, five Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) terminals, development of Ferry services at Varanasi, Patna, Bhagalpur, Munger, Kolkata and Haldia and Vessel repair and maintenance facilities.

While the contracts for construction of multi-modal terminals at Varanasi, Sahibganj, and a new Navigation Lock at Farakka have been awarded, and the work at respective sites has commenced, the construction of multi-modal terminal at Haldia will begin soon. The foundation stone for the multi-modal terminal at Sahibganj was laid by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 6th April, 2017. In August 2016, the Minister for Road Transport, Highways & Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for multi-modal terminal at Varanasi.

Jal Marg Vikas Project also includes proposal for Performance Based Maintenance Dredging Contract for Provision of Least Assured Depth (LAD) of 3 metres between Farakka to Kahalgaon, and Sultanganj to Barh; LAD of 2.5 metres between Barh to Doriganj, and Doriganj to Ghazipur; and LAD of 2.2 metres between Ghazipur to Varanasi.

In addition, the project will enable IWAI setting up of River Information Service System on NW -1 for the first time in India. River Information System (RIS) are equipment, hardware and software information technology (IT) related services designed to optimize traffic and transport processes in inland navigation.

JMVP will also support the design and development of low draft vessels capable of carrying up to 2000 tonnes of cargo in shallower depths.

NW-1 is a waterway of national significance passing through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, serving the major cities of Allahabad, Varanasi, Ghazipur, Bhagalpur, Patna, Howrah, Haldia and Kolkata, and their industrial hinterland including several industries located in the Ganga basin. The Rail and Road corridors in this region are heavily saturated. Hence, the development of NW-1 would provide an alternative, viable, economical, efficient and eco-friendly mode of transport. The waterway will act as a catalyst in the socio-economic development of the regions by creating new business and employment opportunities.
