

India's first container movement on inland waterways

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What to study?

- For Prelims: IWAI- objectives, composition and significance, NW- 1.
- For Mains: Significance of Inland waterways, challenges involved therein.

Context: Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will transport container cargo belonging to the food and beverage giant PepsiCo (India) from Kolkata to Varanasi on river Ganga (National Waterway-1).

Significance: This would be the **country's first container movement on inland vessel post-independence.**

Facts for Prelims:

- PepsiCo (India) will move 16 containers – equivalent to 16 truckloads- filled with food and snacks in the vessel MV RN Tagore which will reach Varanasi in 9-10 days. MV RN Tagore will make its return journey with fertilizers belonging to IFFCO that will be procured from its Phulpur plant near Allahabad.
- **The government 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.
- **States covered under NW-1: States:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.

Benefits of container movement on inland waterways:

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.

Know about IWAI:

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is **the statutory authority in charge of the waterways in India.** Its headquarters is located in Noida, UP. It does the function of building the necessary infrastructure in these waterways, surveying the economic feasibility of new projects and also administration.

To be looked in UPSC Paper 3: Infrastructure- waterways.