

Cargo traffic on Ganga waterway may rise to 21.89 MT by 2021: Gadkari

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The National Waterway 1 on river Ganga is expected to see 21.89 million tonnes (MT) of cargo traffic in the next two to three years on the back of government measures to promote inland water transport in the country, Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

Besides, 13 standardised state-of-the-art ship designs have been drawn as part of efforts to boost river transport and remove any ambiguity on vessel sizes that can sail on Ganga, Mr Gadkari added.

“We have taken a slew of steps to promote inland water transport, which has been

neglected so far. A study has projected traffic at 21.89 MT on National Waterway 1 (NW-1) by 2021,” minister of water resources and Ganga rejuvenation Mr Gadkari said.

The cargo traffic on NW-1 was 5.5 MT in 2017-18, he said. Currently, various projects underway on NW 1 have the terminal capacity of 13.62 MT and these include Varanasi, Haldia and Sahebganj multi-modal hubs, the minister further said.

With the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) coming up with 13 vessel designs, this move would serve as an enabler for domestic ship-building industry working on inland vessels and open huge

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possibilities for cargo and passenger movement on NW-1. The government is implementing Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) for capacity augmentation of navigation on NW-1 (Varanasi-Haldia stretch) at a cost of Rs 5,369.18 crore with the technical assistance and investment support of the World Bank.

Even as the work on JMVP is going on in full steam, the specially designed vessels will navigate on low drafts with high

carrying capacity and at the same time the project would be environment friendly, an official said.

The new designs will translate into savings of Rs 30-50 lakh in the building of a vessel, he added. These vessels have been designed to sail even in depths of about 2 metres carrying about 350 cars on a five deck car carrier.

“Some of the designs would enable movement of bulk cargo carriers with capacity of 2,500 tonnes at 3 metres depth, thereby, removing almost 150 truckloads of pressure from the road or one full rail rake with the plying of just one such vessel,” the official added.