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IWAI turns aggregator for cargo owners and shippers

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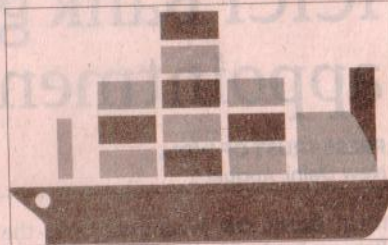
THE INLAND WATERWAYS Authority of India (IWAI) has launched a dedicated portal to connect cargo owners and shippers with real time data on availability of vessels, the government said on Wednesday.

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.

"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," ministry of shipping said in a statement.

IWAI chairperson Nutan Guha Biswas said the step is in line with the 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.

The portal has been named as the Forum of Cargo Owners and Logistics Operators (FOCAL) and it will facilitate responses from the logistics 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, the statement said adding, 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 statement said. 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% of GDP, is about twice of that in the United States.

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