

MOVEMENT OF OVER DIMENSIONAL CARGO THROUGH INLAND WATER TRANSPORT



Indian economy has grown @ 9 per cent during the Tenth Plan and despite world wide economic slow-down, the economy continues to post a healthy growth of around 7 per cent per annum. Indications are that India's growth rate will cross 8 percent mark in the year 2010. A World Bank Study has revealed that India's growth story may even overtake that of China in the next two years.

Among the major 'growth drivers' are new investments in core infrastructure sector such as power, roads, rail, ports, airports, oil and gas exploration, mining etc. During the 11th Five Year Plan, several new green field ultra mega power projects, super thermal power stations are expected to be commissioned in the Private sector, by Central Power Utilities like NTPC, NHPC, ONGC, Joint ventures of State Power Utilities with Private Sector / Central Power Utilities etc. Work has commenced on a number of such projects and more are on the anvil. In addition, large scale capacity addition to existing power plants are also taking place. The Thermal power plants are located near the coal pit heads in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc. or near the coast if they are to be based on imported coal. Gas based power stations are also coming up in various location spread across the country. Several new Hydel power plants are coming up in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand and Himachal Pradesh among others. Likewise, several new nuclear power stations are also likely to come up in the next decade.

In the oil and gas exploration sector, mega investments are planned by both the private sector and State PSUs like ONGC. New refineries, capacity addition in existing refineries and their modernization are also envisaged during the next few years. Similar activity is likely to take place in respect of fertilizer units located all over the country. In addition, new cement plants are coming up in various parts of the country. Huge investments are being made in the Mining sector as well.

Consequently, critical power generation equipments like boilers, transformers, stators etc. are being manufactured in various plants of BHEL or are being imported. These need to be then moved from the manufacturing plants / ports to their destination through road / rail or inland water transport. Same is the case with various power equipment meant for power transmission and distribution. Over Dimensional Cargo weighing over 100 tonnes need to be moved.

Experience suggests that in several cases, our roads and road bridges are not designed to cater to movement of such heavy loads and dimensions. Often, it is difficult to move them through railways especially if the track passes through tunnel sections and old bridges. In such situations, more often than not, there is no option other than planning movement of such heavy over dimensional cargo through inland water transport.

Movement of Over Dimensional Cargo (ODC) is a specialized activity which needs careful planning and execution. There are a few experienced private operators who cater to this niche requirement.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), set up in 1986 by an Act of Parliament, has been entrusted the task of development and regulation of the National Waterways. The Authority undertakes infrastructure development and maintenance works on national waterways. Presently, there are five National Waterways. These are as under :

