



On 14-11-2022, the Views of Hon'ble Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sri Sarbananda Sonowal Garu were published by various News agencies.

ET Q&A **SARBANANDA SONOWAL**
SHIPPING AND PORTS MINISTER

Goal is to Ensure Private Cos' Share in Cargo Handling Rises

India is eyeing cargo handling by the private sector to jump to 85% by 2030 from 56% now as it implements the National Monetisation Pipeline, minister for shipping and ports Sarbananda Sonowal told ET. Total cargo handled at ports stood at 1251.38 million tonnes in 2020-21. In an interview to **Twesh Mishra**, Sonowal, who inaugurated the Community Jetties on NW-1 (River Ganga) in Varanasi, said the government wants the private sector to operate more jetties and terminals and is open to restoring financial support for inland waterways. Edited excerpts:

PM Gati Shakti lays emphasis on development of inland waterways. How feasible is the plan?

The goals are very feasible if you consider the progress in the last eight years. Up to 2013-14, cargo handling capacity of inland waterways stood at only 16 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). In just eight years, it has risen to 109 mtpa. This massive growth has been possible because the government paid attention and developed infrastructure. Private sector was also taken on board by sensitising them about using the rivers. Cargo handling capacity has significantly increased in coastal shipping, maritime trade, mainline shipping and via inland waterways. Development of competitive infrastructure and bringing down logistics costs is a key focus area for the government.

What is the progress from the shipping sector under National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)?

The shipping ministry's target under asset monetisation is ₹12,550 crore for 2022-23. Our goal is to ensure that the cargo handling capacity of the private sector grows under the plan. Private sector handles 56% of the total cargo at present. This is expected to increase to 85%. We would also want the private sector to



operate more jetties and terminals.

You inaugurated Community Jetties on NW-1 (River Ganga) in Varanasi last week. What is the progress on National Waterways?

We'll have to put in more effort. The Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) aims to develop multimodal terminals on the Ganga with assistance of the World Bank. This is followed by the Project Arth Ganga which involves building 60 community jetties from Varanasi to Haldia, covering four states over 1,390 km. These will benefit people on both banks of the river by easing movement of passenger and cargo vessels. These programmes have expedited the cultural and economic growth of people living around the Ganga. The target for completion of JMVP Ganga is December 2023 and we expect to complete it in time.

There has been a demand for restoration of subsidy for moving goods through inland waterways in the North East region.

We are exploring every aspect to strengthen and encourage inland waterways that ultimately benefit people in goods transportation and provide seamless connectivity in that region. We have had very engaging discussions with the representatives of state governments on how to make inland waterways an alternative to roads and railways that will also be



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cost-effective with seamless accessibility in terms of roads and jetties. We are looking at it holistically.

There have been concerns about corruption in dredging...

There are valid concerns around dredging. Who can check under the riverbed? We have tried to address these concerns. We are relying on drone technology through which we can study a riverbed. It can also assess the extent of depth of dredging. We have also introduced the concept of assured dredging. Under this, if a contractor is to dredge to a depth of 2.5 metres, the payment will be withheld if the target is not met. Attention is being paid to ensure there is transparency in these operations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also concerned about it.

We have also instructed the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) to enter the river sector.

Inland waterways will reshape transportation

The proposal to push inland waterways as a preferred mode of transportation ties in with India's vision of promoting sustainable growth, especially in the peripheral regions, and reducing India's carbon footprint. The inland waterways will play a crucial role in realising Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's vision of making India a zero-carbon emission country by 2070.

The inland waterways sector comprises river systems, canals, backwaters, creeks and tidal inlets. This allows the scope of transportation to expand and provide movement solutions at a 30% lower cost than railways and a 60% lower cost than roadways. The neglect of this mode of transportation has been reversed since 2014, when the government made it a mission to reinvigorate the inland waterways system. In FY 2021-22, cargo movement reached an all-time high of 108.79 million tonnes vis-a-vis 83.61 million tonnes during the previous FY, registering a 30.12% year-on-year growth. We intend to build on this success. Varanasi, one of the oldest living cities, provides the perfect platform.

Under the leadership of PM Modi, India is working hard to transform the economy through this environment-friendly and economical mode of transportation as India moves towards becoming *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant) during *Amrit Kaal*. Many crucial steps such as the enhancement and development on a priority basis of 23 national waterways, boosting regional connectivity with Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan; the development of terminal infrastructure for RO-RO and ferry services and policy interventions to incentivise the development of the inland waterways sector are underway.

The visionary PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan shows how to bring about the Transformation through Transportation spirit in India. With spending to the tune of \$1.5 trillion on infrastructure development, including rail, road and waterways connectivity, the efficiency and cost of logistics are poised to be optimised and ensure last-mile connectivity, paving the way for the seamless movement of people and cargo. It's driven by seven engines of growth, namely railways, roads, ports, waterways, airports, mass transport and logistics infrastructure. This also means breaking down departmental silos. This will translate into economic gains for consumers, farmers, youth, and those

engaged in businesses. It will improve supply chains and will make local goods globally competitive. The government is considering a rebate on land leases for industrial clusters near the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) terminals, offering multi-modal transport options and logistics zones within industrial clusters.

Priority development of National Waterway-1 was undertaken through the Jal Vikas Marg Project (JVMP), which includes Arth Ganga, and they will give an economic boost of ₹1,000 crore over the next five years. Besides trade benefits, the local community's enhancement and passenger facilitation will also ensure large-scale skills development and boost public/private sector capability.

A World Bank study shows that one litre of fuel can move 105 tonne-km by inland water transport, against 85 tonne-km by rail and 24 tonne-km by road. Similarly, the carbon emission per tonne-km is 32-36 gm in the case of container vessels, against 51-91 gm for road transport vehicles. This also means we must use renewable energy in inland waterways.

With India's burgeoning population and increasing traffic, the development of inland waterways will not only reduce travel time and ensure a seamless journey for people and goods, be cost-effective, and bring down pollution levels, we can holistically design a policy that factors in safety, infrastructure support, inter-state coordination and integrate with other transportation modes.

The government is committed to creating solutions appropriate for the demands of the future. The development of inland waterways is a step in this direction to take development into the heartland of the country and ensure an environmentally responsible and economically sustainable mode of transportation that can bear the load of the economic growth, which will make India become an *atmanirbhar* country by 2047. With the spirit of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas*, the government is committed to working with the people to develop inland waterways as the preferred mode of transportation to adapt to future challenges and enable the transformation of India.



Sarbananda Sonowal

Sarbananda Sonowal is minister for ports, shipping and inland waterways
The views expressed are personal



వ్రెస్ నోట్

విశాఖపట్నం ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ (వి.ఎఫ్.హెచ్) రూ.525 లక్షల పెట్టుబడితో విశాఖపట్నం పోర్ట్ ద్వారా 1976లో స్థాపించబడింది మరియు మత్స్య శాఖ ద్వారా నిర్వహించబడుతుంది, VFH 24 హెక్టార్ల భూమిలో 1300 మీటర్ల వార్ప్ పొడవుతో ఉంది. 5 ఫిషింగ్ జెట్టీలు, 6 వేలం హాల్స్, 01 నెట్ మెండింగ్ హాల్.

24 మంది అధికారులతో కూడిన ఎగుమతి సేకరణ కేంద్రం, విశాఖపట్నం ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ నుండి 1300 ఫిషింగ్ వెసెల్స్, రోజుకు 150 టన్నుల చేపలు, 700 మెకనైజ్డ్ బోట్లు, 450 మోటరైజ్డ్ బోట్లు, 15 బీచ్ ల్యాండింగ్ క్రాఫ్లు మరియు 150 మోటారు లేని సాంప్రదాయ క్రాఫ్లు వి.ఎఫ్.హెచ్.లో పనిచేస్తున్నాయి.

1976లో ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ ఏర్పాటునప్పటి నుండి, ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ సాధారణ మరమ్మతులు మరియు నిర్వహణ మినహా పెద్దగా పెట్టుబడి లేదు. ఇప్పుడు, మన గౌరవనీయులైన ప్రధాన మంత్రి శ్రీ నరేంద్ర మోదీ జీ గారి నాయకత్వంలో ప్రభుత్వం, రూ.152 కోట్ల పెట్టుబడితో విశాఖపట్నం ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ ఆధునికీకరణ మరియు అప్గ్రేడేషన్ కోసం నిర్ణయం తీసుకున్నారు. దీనికి సంబంధించి, గౌరవనీయులైన ప్రధాన మంత్రి శ్రీ నరేంద్ర మోదీ గారు 12.11.2022న ఆంధ్రా యూనివర్సిటీ ఇంజనీరింగ్ గ్రౌండ్స్లో విశాఖపట్నం ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ మరియు ఇతర ప్రాజెక్టుల ఆధునికీకరణ మరియు అప్గ్రేడేషన్ కోసం శంకుస్థాపన చేశారు.

ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ గౌరవ

ముఖ్యమంత్రి శ్రీ వై.ఎస్. జగన్ మోహన్ రెడ్డి గారు, ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ గవర్నర్ బిశ్వభూషణ్ హరిచందన్ గారు, గౌరవనీయులైన కేంద్ర రైల్వే మరియు ఐటీ శాఖ మంత్రి శ్రీ శ్రీ అశ్విని వైష్ణవ్ మరియు ఇతరులు ఈ కార్యక్రమంలో పాల్గొన్నారు,

చేపలు పట్టడం, నిల్వ చేయడం, ఎగుమతులు మరియు జీవన నాణ్యతను మెరుగుపరచడానికి మరియు అదనంగా 15,000 కుటుంబాలకు ఉపాధి కల్పించడానికి ప్రపంచ స్థాయి సౌకర్యాలతో ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ ఆధునికీకరించబడుతోంది.

ప్రాజెక్ట్ యొక్క కీలక టేకావేలు క్రింది విధంగా ఉన్నాయి:

1. ప్రస్తుతం బోట్లను ఆఫ్లోడ్ చేయడానికి 2 గంటలు పడుతుంది మరియు మొత్తం ప్రక్రియ మాన్యువల్ గా ఉంది. ఇది 40 ట్రైపాడ్లతో ఆటోమేట్ చేయబడుతోంది. ఇది చేపలను ఆఫ్లోడ్ చేయడానికి పట్టే సమయాన్ని తగ్గిస్తుంది.
2. చేపలను నేరుగా వేలం హాల్ కు తరలించడానికి కన్వేయర్ సిస్టమ్ ను ఏర్పాటు ఏర్పాటు చేస్తున్నారు
3. పడవ నుండి వేలం హాలు వరకు యాంత్రిక వ్యవస్థ ఏర్పాటు చేస్తున్నారు
4. ప్రస్తుతం ఫిషింగ్ హార్బర్ వద్ద బహిరంగ ప్రదేశంలో చేపల ఎండబెట్టడం జరుగుతుంది. చేపలను ఎండబెట్టడానికి 2-రోజులు పడుతుంది. దీన్ని వేగంగా చేయడం కోసం 20 మెకనైజ్డ్ డ్రైయర్లు అమర్చబడతాయి
5. 450 KLD సామర్థ్యంతో రెండు ఎఫ్లూయెంట్ ట్రీట్ మెంట్ ప్లాంట్ అమర్చబడతాయి
6. అమ్ముడుపోని చేపలను నిల్వ చేయడానికి చిల్ రూమ్ సౌకర్యం అందుబాటులో ఉంచబడుతున్నారు.
7. ఘన వ్యర్థ పదార్థాల నిర్వహణ వ్యవస్థ అభివృద్ధి చేయబడుతుంది
8. 900 చ.మీ. 50 టన్నుల నిల్వ సామర్థ్యంతో కోల్డ్ ఛాంబర్లను అభివృద్ధి చేస్తారు.
9. చేపల అమ్మకం కోసం ఇ-వేలం ప్లాట్ ఫారమ్ ను అభివృద్ధి చేయాలని ప్రతిపాదించబడింది.



Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour (VFH) was established in the year 1976 by Visakhapatnam Port with an investment of Rs.525 lakhs and is administered by the Department of Fisheries, The VFH is situated in 24 hectares of land with a Wharf length of 1300 Mtrs. 5 Fishing Jetties, 6 Auction Halls, 01 Net mending hall. Export Procurement Centre with 24 officers., 1300 Fishing Vessels operate from Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour, 150 Tons of fish catch per day, 700 mechanized boats, 450 motorized boats, 15 beach landing crafts and 150 non-motorized traditional crafts are operating at VFH.

Since the establishment of Fishing Harbour in 1976, there has been no major investment except for general repairs and maintenance of Fishing Harbour. Now, under the dynamic leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi Ji the Govt. have taken a decision for Modernisation and upgradation of Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour with an investment of Rs.152 crores. In this connection, Foundation stone was laid by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi Ji for Modernisation and upgradation of Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour and other projects in the presence of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Govt. Of Andhra Pradesh Sri Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy Garu, Sri Biswabhusan Harichandan Garu, Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Hon'ble Union Railways and IT Minister and others at Andhra University Engineering Grounds on 12.11.2022.

The existing Fishing Harbour is being modernized with world class facilities to improve the Fish catch, Storage, Exports and Quality of life with good ambience and provide employment to additional 15,000 families. The key takeaways of the project are as follows:

- Presently it is taking 2 hours to off load the boats and the entire process is manual. This is being automated with 40 Tripods. This will decrease the time taken to offload the fish.
- Automation is being made with the installation of a Conveyor System for movement of fish to the Auction Hall directly.
- Mechanized system from the boat to the Auction Hall
- Fish drying is presently carried out in the open area at the Fishing Harbour. It takes 2-3 days to dry the fish.
- 20 mechanised dryers will be installed
- Two Effluent Treatment Plant with a total capacity of 450 KLD to keep the premises neat and clean
- 7) Chill Room facility will be made available to store the unsold fish.
- Solid waste management system will be developed
- A 900 Sq.mtrs. Cold Chambers with a capacity of 50 Tons storage will be developed.
- E-auction platform is proposed to be developed for selling of Fish.

Secretary / VPA