

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION

**3RD SECTORAL SUMMIT OF NEC TO REVIEW COMMODITY BOARDS AND
APEDA, INLAND WATER TRANSPORT, FLOOD & EROSION CONTROL AND
IRRIGATION SECTOR PROGRAMMES IN THE NORTH EASTERN REGION HELD
AT GUWAHATI ON 09-11 MARCH 2007.**

INLAND WATER TRANSPORT:

INTRODUCTION – ISSUES – CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The North Eastern Council (NEC) at its 53rd meeting held at New Delhi on 15-16 November, 2006 decided that as a Regional Planning Body for the NER, sector specific meetings be organized every month by rotation in the eight North Eastern States to review Central Sector/Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) being implemented by Central Ministries in the region. A schedule of the first 16 meetings was drawn up which is hosted on the Ministry of DONER's website <http://www.mdoner.gov.in>.

2. Hon'ble Minister, DONER/Chairman, NEC chaired the **1st Sectoral Summit** at Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh on 16-17 January, 2007. Power Sector programmes were reviewed after two days of deliberation, the **Pasighat Proclamation on Power** and the issues and conclusions arrived at the meeting were drafted and circulated. Both these documents are hosted on the Ministry of DONER's website <http://www.mdoner.gov.in> and have also been circulated amongst all concerned.

3. Hon'ble Minister, DONER/Chairman, NEC chaired the **2nd Sectoral Summit** at Shillong, Meghalaya on 08-09 February, 2007. Road Sector programmes were reviewed. The **Shillong Statement on Roads & Highways** and other documents listed the issues and conclusions arrived at after the two days deliberation were

finalized and circulated amongst all concerned. The documents are also hosted on the Ministry of DONER's website <http://www.mdoner.gov.in>.

4. The **3rd Sectoral Summit** of the NEC was held at **Guwahati on 09-11 March, 2007**. The following sectors were taken up for review:

- 1) Commodity Boards and APEDA, Ministry of Commerce.
- 2) Inland Water Transport, Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways.
- 3) Flood & Erosion Control and Irrigation, Ministry of Water Resources.

List of participants is annexed.

Issues and conclusions arrived at after discussions in respect of the Inland Water Transport Sector programmes in the NER are enumerated below:

INLAND WATER TRANSPORT (IWT)

ISSUES:

- (i) Inland Water Transport offers a shorter and cheaper route for transport of bulk commodities and project cargo. It is operational even during flood season and offers large employment potential.
- (ii) Development of IWT in NER is a strategic and economic imperative. Need for increasing investments and increasing efficiency of IWT mode was recognized.
- (iii) The Brahmaputra River from Dhubri to Sadiya (891 km) declared as National Waterway-II in 1988. Declaration of Barak River from Lakhimpur to Bhanga (121 km) as National Waterway-VI is under process.
- (iv) Ministry of Shipping/IWAI administers a 100% Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) for development of feeder routes by States to NW-II and other rivers.
- (v) Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has commissioned a study through RITES on feasibility of the multi-modal Kaladan River route from Mizoram to Sittwe port in Myanmar and then by sea to Kolkata port.
- (vi) Indo-Bangladesh Protocol is currently being renewed on very short term basis. Long term renewal of the Protocol necessary for building up confidence in the IWT route.

- (vii) CSS being discontinued from 2007-08 except for NER. The new Central Scheme will be administered by M/o DONER.
- (viii) On NW-II, which will become fully functional by March, 2009, IWAI has taken up river conservancy works (Rs.12.30 crore) targeted for completion by March, 2008, maintenance of floating terminals (Rs.1.96 crore) at Dhubri, Jogighopa, Pandu, Tezpur, Silghat, Jamguri, Neamati, Bogibeel, Saikhowa and Sadiya, coal handling terminal (Rs.5.30 crore) at Jogighopa, night navigational aids (Rs.1.28 crore) from Dhubri to Pandu, 24 hrs navigation facilities including setting up of DGPS Stations (Rs.18.77 crore) at Jogighopa, Tezpur and Dibrugarh and construction of permanent terminal (Rs.67.74 crore) at Pandu.
- (ix) Upstream cargo from Kolkata to Pandu mainly includes bitumen, steel, pipes, cement, detergent, batteries, etc. Downstream cargo on NW-II includes gypsum, tea, jute, coal, diesel (Numaligarh Refinery). The potential is much more.
- (x) Cargo moment on NW-II is projected to increase from 0.75 btkm to 4.87 btkm by 2024-25.
- (xi) Chief Secretary, Assam made a brief presentation highlighting the need for additional funding for replacement/renovation of 257 vessels and other activities. He specifically referred to manual handling of IWT cargo leading to increase in the cost and expressed support for permanent structures as compared to pontoon bridges and recommended dredging of fairways.
- (xii) Arunachal Pradesh representative highlighted the need for awareness generation amongst people to use waterways and training. He pleaded for financial support for carrying out feasibility studies for development of feeder routes.
- (xiii) Tripura representative requested that Ashuganj be declared as a Port- of- Call and suggested expeditious persuasion of Bangladesh. He requested IWAI's assistance for carrying out the survey of river Gumti to assess its navigation feasibility.
- (xiv) Mizoram representative requested for development of IWT on the Tlawng river.

CONCLUSION:

- (i) Ministry of Shipping/IWAI to follow up with the Ministry of External Affairs the renewal of Indo-Bangladesh IWT protocol on long term basis and expeditious approval of the Kaladan River multi-modal transport route from Mizoram to Sittwe port.
- (ii) IWAI to ensure that NW-II is made fully operational within March, 2009 and expedite necessary approval for declaration of Barak River (Lakhipur to Bhanga) as NW-VI and take up development of the waterway on priority.
- (iii) IWAI to develop credible night navigation facilities on NW-II to reduce travel time. Ministry of Shipping/IWAI to consider deputing a delegation abroad for studying effective methodology for providing night navigation facilities.
- (iv) To reduce manual handling of cargo, IWAI to consider providing mechanical handling of cargo.
- (v) IWAI to consider proposal from the Govt. of Mizoram to link the Tlawng and Barak Rivers to enable transport of cargo from Mizoram into the Barak Valley and further through the proposed NW-VI.
- (vi) Ministry of Shipping/IWAI to take up the Tripura Government proposal for declaring Ashuganj as Port-of-Call during the next meeting with Bangladesh.
- (vii) The existing CSS needs to be revisited and funding under the new Central Sector Scheme, to be administered by M/O DONER, to be raised substantially with components on capacity building and assistance to the States to carry-out survey and investigation and preparation of DPRs.
- (viii) IWAI to carry out awareness campaigns on the possibility of developing navigation facilities on rivers in Arunachal Pradesh. State Govt. advised to submit proposals for accessing funds available under the 100% CSS.
- (ix) Government of Tripura to send a formal proposal to IWAI for carrying out feasibility survey of the Gumti River.
- (x) IWAI to expedite EFC for procuring four cutter suction dredger and other equipment for carrying out dredging operations on NW-II.
- (xi) DONER to work out details of the new Central Scheme in consultation with the Planning Commission, Ministry of Shipping/IWAI and the NE States for implementation WEF 2007-08.

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