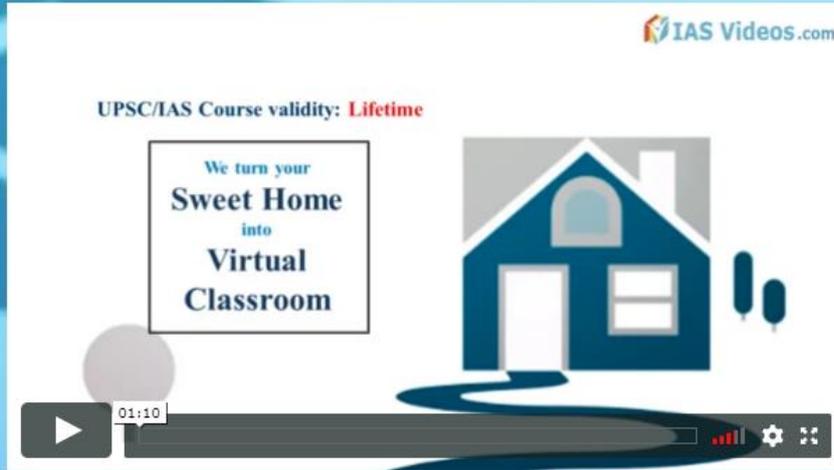


# January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Sample Current Affairs

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## 1. The inland waterways project will destroy India's rivers

- Why central government is very optimistic about the project?
- How does this IWT project destroy Indian rivers?
- What can be done to minimize impacts in sensitive zones?

### GS paper 3 ( Conservation )

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.

The above article has been retrieved from:

Manoj

Misra . ( 2019, January , 5). The inland waterways project will destroy India's rivers. Hindustan Times. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/the-inland-waterways-project-will-destroy-india-s-rivers/story-8TDyHX1UuzQzKwWhHXQVPJ.html>

### What is the context about?

- On December 15, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) gave the Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEF&CC) time until January 31 to clarify its position on the need for prior environment clearances for inland waterway transport (IWT) projects.
- Currently, clearances are issued on a case-to-case basis and are not mandatory. The National Waterways Act,

2016, identified 111 rivers or stretches as national waterways for commercial navigation.



### **Why central government is very optimistic about the project?**

- The Centre is very optimistic about the project because it claims IWT is “fuel efficient, cost effective and environment friendly mode of transport ...” (National Waterways Bill, 2015).
- It takes lesser time to transport cargo by waterways and the chances of congestion and accidents on highways are eliminated.
- There is a huge potential for domestic cargo transportation as well as for cruise, tourism and passenger traffic.
- There is huge potential for public private partnership (PPP) led investments in dredging, construction,

operation and maintenance of barges, terminals, storage facilities, and navigation, as well as tourism.

- It will help in the generation of millions of job opportunities.
- It will boost the maritime trade of the states and augment their economies.

### **How does this IWT project destroy Indian rivers?**

- River experts feel that it is a misnomer to say that inland water transport would be cheap. The most contentious issue is dredging of the river and its costs.
- To allow ocean vessels to traverse a river, it should have a depth of 2 to 3 metres and a width of 45-60 metres, parameter that the Ganga River does not fulfil. The river will have to be dredged continuously which will cause severe erosion.
- Besides erosion, dredging will destroy aquatic life of the river as dredging increases water turbidity, which affects fish.
- It also affects benthic organisms that are creatures which live in and on the bottom of the river bed. They include worms, clams, crabs, lobsters, sponges, and many other tiny organisms that live in the nethermost sediments.

### **What can be done to minimize impacts in sensitive zones?**

- ✓ A ban on dredging in protected habitat areas. In other areas that are known to be the habitat of valued aquatic

species, no dredging should be allowed in the breeding and spawning seasons.

- ✓ The speed of barges travelling along the protected areas of the sanctuaries should be restricted to 5km per hour. All vessels plying on the Ganga should be fitted with noise control and animal exclusion devices so that aquatic life is not unduly disturbed. All vessels will also have to comply with 'zero discharge' standards to prevent solid or liquid waste from flowing into the river and affecting its biodiversity.