

Inland vessels bill

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In news

The Union Cabinet has given approval for Inland vessels bill 2021 recently

Inland vessels bill and Key provisions

- The proposed bill will replace the Inland Vessels Act, 1917.
- **Regulation:** The Bill will regulate safety, security and registration of inland vessels.
- **Unified law:** It proposes a unified law for the entire country, instead of separate rules framed by the States.
- **Certificate of registration:** The certificate of registration granted under the proposed law will be deemed to be valid in all States and Union Territories, and there will be no need to seek separate permissions from the States.
- **Central database:** It also provides for a central database for recording the details of vessel, vessel registration, crew on an electronic portal.
- **Mandatory registration:** It requires all mechanically propelled vessels to be mandatorily registered. All non-mechanically propelled vessels will also have to be enrolled at district, taluk or panchayat or village level.

A brief note on Inland waterways in India

- India has an extensive network of inland waterways in the form of rivers, canals, backwaters and creeks.
- The total navigable length is 14,500 km, out of which about 5,200 km of river and 4,000 km of canal can be used by mechanized crafts.
- Freight transportation by waterways is highly under-

utilised in India compared to other large countries

- The total cargo moved (in tonne kilometres) by the inland waterway was just 0.1% of the total inland traffic in India, compared to the 21% figure for the United States.
- Cargo transportation in an organised manner is confined to a few waterways in Goa, West Bengal, Assam, and Kerala.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

- It was constituted in October 1986, for the development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- The Authority undertakes various infrastructure development works on national waterways.
- It also carries out feasibility studies and prepares proposals for declaration of other waterways as National Waterways.
- It also assists States in development of IWT sector and provides subsidy to IWT operators for acquiring IWT fleet for transportation of cargo and passengers.
- Its headquarters is located in Noida, UP.