

TO BE INTRODUCED IN LOK SABHA

Bill No. 73 of 2007

THE NATIONAL WATERWAY (LAKHIPUR-BHANGA STRETCH
OF THE BARAK RIVER) BILL, 2007

A

BILL

to provide for the declaration of the Lakhipur-Bhanga Stretch of the Barak river to be a national waterway and also to provide for the regulation and development of the said Stretch of that river for the purposes of shipping and navigation on the said waterway and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-eighth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the National Waterway (Lakhipur-Bhanga Stretch of the Barak River) Act, 2007. Short title and commencement.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Declaration
of Lakhipur-
Bhanga
Stretch of
Barak river to
be national
waterway.

2. The Lakhipur-Bhanga Stretch of the Barak river, the limits of which are specified in the Schedule, is hereby declared to be a national waterway.

Declaration as
to expediency
of control by
the Union of
Lakhipur-
Bhanga
Stretch of
Barak river
for certain
purposes.

3. It is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that the Union should take under its control the regulation and development of Lakhipur-Bhanga Stretch of the Barak river for the purposes of shipping and navigation on the national waterway to the extent provided in the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985.

82 of 1985.

THE SCHEDULE

(See section 2)

LIMITS OF THE NATIONAL WATERWAY (LAKHIPUR-BHANGA STRETCH OF THE BARAK RIVER)

The eastern limit of the waterway shall be a line drawn across the Barak river in the State of Assam at Lakhipur ferry ghat (at latitude $24^{\circ} 47' 26''$ north and longitude $93^{\circ} 00' 14''$ east) and the western limit shall be a line drawn across the Barak river at a distance of two hundred meters east of its bifurcation point at Bhanga (at latitude $24^{\circ} 52' 33''$ north and longitude $92^{\circ} 29' 48''$ east).

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

In the absence of a suitable organisation and paucity of resources with State Governments, development of inland water transport has not made much headway. There are certain advantages in this mode of transport, such as its low cost of transport, energy efficiency, generation of employment among weaker sections of the society and eco-friendly nature. Various committees set up by the Government for the purpose of looking into this matter recommended that the Central Government should declare certain waterways as National Waterways and assume responsibility of their development.

2. The Central Government has accordingly constituted the Inland Waterways Authority of India under the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985 (82 of 1985) for the regulation and development of inland waterways for the purposes of shipping and navigation. The Allahabad-Haldia stretch of the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river has already been declared as a National Waterway under the National Waterway (Allahabad-Haldia Stretch of Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River) Act, 1982 (49 of 1982). Similarly, the Sadiya-Dhubri stretch of the Brahmaputra river and the Kollam-Kottapuram stretch of the West Coast Canal along with Champakara and Udyogmandal canals have also been declared as National Waterways respectively under the National Waterway (Sadiya-Dhubri Stretch of the Brahmaputra River) Act, 1988 (40 of 1988) and the National Waterway (Kollam-Kottapuram Stretch of the West Coast Canal and Champakara and Udyogmandal Canals) Act, 1992 (25 of 1992). Consequently, the Inland Waterways Authority of India has taken up the development, maintenance and management of these National Waterways.

3. It is now proposed to declare the Lakhimpur-Bhanga stretch of the Barak river as a National Waterway. Infrastructural facilities currently available on this waterway are not adequate for safe, convenient and sustained shipping and navigation by large mechanised crafts. Therefore, the waterway is required to be developed by providing adequate infrastructure for safe, convenient and sustained shipping operations. The regulation and development of the proposed National Waterway under the control of the Union for the purposes of shipping and navigation is in the public interest and declaration to that effect has also been made in this Bill.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objects.

NEW DELHI;

T.R. BAALU.

The 21st August, 2007.

PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION UNDER ARTICLE 117 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

[Copy of letter No. NW-12013/1/2000-IWT(Vol. II) dated the 6th August, 2007 from Shri T.R. Baalu, Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways to the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha]

The President, having been informed of the subject matter of the proposed National Waterway (Lakhimpur-Bhanga Stretch of the Barak River) Bill, 2007, recommends to the House the consideration of the Bill under article 117 (3) of the Constitution.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

The regulation and development of the proposed national waterway will be carried out by the Inland Waterways Authority of India constituted under the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985. Consequently, three distinct functions namely, development, maintenance and management of the proposed waterway will devolve on the Inland Waterways Authority of India. It has been visualised that inland water transport traffic to the tune of 10.53 lakh tones is likely to be carried on the proposed national waterway after its full development by the year 2011-12. This traffic is expected to be handled at four terminals, namely, Laxhipur, Silchar, Badarpur and Bhanga. The development of the river along with provisions of infrastructure facilities for the purposes of shipping and navigation to handle the above mentioned traffic includes the development of the waterway for navigation, channel marking, construction of terminals, transit sheds, installation of handling equipment, etc. It is estimated that the expenditure with respect to the said development will be of the order of rupees forty-six crores which will be of a non-recurring nature.

2. In addition, it is estimated that an expenditure of recurring nature of the order of rupees four crores twenty lakhs annually will be incurred for operating the waterway and terminals.

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(Shri T.R. Baalu, Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways)