

Rhenus Signs MoU with Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

Category: Business

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Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), leading global logistics service provider, the Rhenus Group, will operate barge services in various National Waterways in India. In the first phase, Rhenus will introduce push boats and 20 flat bottom barges from Germany with a capacity of 400 tonnes, which can be combined to transport up to 1,200 tonnes per trip. As demand grows, Rhenus India will scale its fleet to 100 barges and expand its corridors across the Indian subcontinent. The partnership with IWAI aims to contribute towards building a resilient multi-modal logistics ecosystem in India, with the eventual goal of carrying over a million tonnes of cargo per year by 2025.

The MoU was signed at the IWAI office on 5 May 2025 and the formal exchange of the MoU took place in the presence of the Hon'ble Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal on 6 May 2025. The Minister's presence underscored the governments strong commitment to strengthening inland waterways as a key pillar of India's logistics ecosystem. Rhenus is proud to support Indias Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 and lead the way in shaping the future of sustainable logistics and contribute to Indias logistics transformation.

With over 14,500 kilometers of navigable waterways, including 111 National Waterways, India's Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector, which is governed by IWAI, has seen significant growth. Cargo volumes have increased from 30 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) in 2014 to 133 MMTPA in 2024.

Rhenus India will introduce its Inland Waterways Transport solutions: barge scheduled services that will facilitate cargo transport on two Indian rivers, the Ganga River and the Brahmaputra River. These sustainable and cost-effective logistics solutions will allow for seamless cargo movements across India and beyond. In this venture, Rhenus is expanding its existing expertise for port operation and inland navigation from Europe to India.

To start, Rhenus India intends to operate barge services on National Waterways NW-1, NW-2, NW-16 and the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route (IBP), with plans to gradually scale up to include other national waterways in the country. A combination of pushers and barges, to suit low-draft navigation in the waterways, will be used to transport both Bulk and Break-Bulk cargo across North & East India, North-East India, and subsequently neighbouring countries. With 1,000 vessels in operations daily on all navigable waterways in Europe, Rhenus will now tap into its Port Logistics experience, in particular in European inland navigation, as well as resources from its European Waterways fleet to further support India's IWT sector.

In Europe, Rhenus has been active in the inland navigation sector since its foundation year 1912. With barge shipping as its core competency, the Rhenus Group built its company and service portfolio around its logistics activities along the Rhine River and diversified them to include air and ocean freight, warehousing, road freight as well as rail, over time, becoming a worldwide logistics solutions provider.

Vivek Arya, CEO of Rhenus Logistics India & Global CEO of Rhenus Warehousing Solutions Intercontinental, said, *"With over 100 years of dedicated expertise in inland waterway operations across Europe, Rhenus is excited to partner with IWAI in this transformative journey to create a smarter, greener and more economical logistics network. Recognizing the immense potential of India's inland waterways, we are*

committed to adapt our best practices to suit the Indian environment and contribute towards seamless waterway movement through our innovative solutions."

Michael de Reese, Division Head of Rhénus Port Logistics, added, *"Inland navigation is the backbone of the producing economy in Germany as well as in Europe. With our expertise and our broad experience in mastering challenges such as infrastructure construction, varying water levels and the training of a reliable expert workforce, we can support the growing Indian economy together with the IWAI."*

About Rhénus

The Rhénus Group is one of the leading logistics specialists with global business operations and annual turnover amounting to EUR 8.2 billion. 41,000 employees work at 1,330 business sites in more than 70 countries and develop innovative solutions along the complete supply chain. Whether providing transport, warehousing, customs clearance or value-added services, the family-owned business pools its operations in various business units where the needs of customers are the major focus at all times.

