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**3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2021**

The Director of Ports &  
Inland Water Transport  
Naval Base Karwar, Arga,  
Uttar Kannada – 581302  
Karnataka.

**Attn: Capt. C. Swamy**

Dear Sir,

Sub: Development of Inland waterway from Bantwal to Markada Bridge  
in Dakshina Kannada - National Waterway 74 and National  
Waterway 43.

Even though India's Inland Waterways Authority has identified the Netravati River as National Waterway 74 and Gurupur River as National Waterway 43, there has not been any budgetary allocation for implementing it.

**The historical significance of Old port and surrounding waterways:**

The Old Port of Bunder, Mangalore, has a historical past of centuries of trade and commerce. It was bustling with various commercial activities, with Dakshina Kannada's hinterland very well connected through Inland waterways. The Tile factories were located all along the Netravati and Gurupur Rivers. Clay was the raw material. The owners of the tile factories transported the clay to the factories from the rivers' hinterland deltas. The same waterways transported the finished products of the factories to the Old Mangalore Port. Merchants loaded the tiles into cargo vessels for export and trade to other inland destinations from the Old port. All the agricultural produce like arecanut, pepper and other such cash crops were transported through the same waterways, including finished Cashew nuts. There was also a bustling passenger ferry between Chota Mangalore and Mangalore at Hoigebazar and Jeppu.

Contd...2.



**Present Status:**

Today, the Old Mangalore Port supports trade basically to the islands of Lakshadweep. They get all their heavy cargo, including construction materials loaded from the Old Port and transported across the sea. The number of sailing vessels and yachts that used to visit the Old port for business and other travel has significantly reduced. One of the reasons is the inland waterways on both the river Nethravathi Gurupur no longer exist. There is no feeder cargo generated from the industrial hinterland due to the lack of efficient waterways. The Old port and its inland waterways are all connected. These waterways must be developed and connected to different ports like Goa, Lakshadweep, Mumbai, Kochi, and Karwar port to spur economic activity.

**Scope and Benefits of development of these waterways:**

The inland water connection needs to start from the interior of the Netravati river from Thumbe and can come down towards the Old Port. It should proceed towards the Maravoor Bridge in the shape of a hockey stick connecting the old port and the Mangalore International Airport. If the entire area is connected, it will form a critical link and a catalyst for economic development all along the river bank. Further, we can also draw a connection to the planned Coast Guard training academy for which 160 acres of land have been allotted, touching the nearby Maravoor area where the Gurpur river flows.

Including coastal trade with Lakshadweep and fishing, the Netravati River has a huge potential for various economic activities like tourism, agri-products and fish industries, along with the hospitality industry. Due to the lack of development on this Waterway, Mangalore cannot tap this region's true potential.

**There is an urgent need to develop the Waterways of NW-74 & NW-43 for the following reasons:**

1. Apart from M/s Bharati Defence and Infrastructure Ltd., (BDIL), which is undertaking the building of vessels for large foreign and Indian clients including the defence establishment, there is considerable talent and skills available for building smaller boats and traditional yachts. If sufficient space is provided in plots of 1-acre size to 50 entrepreneurs on the port land, they can scale up the industry. For this to happen, a good draft for floating the vessels needs to be created. The waterway, if built, will make it possible for the boat building activity to resume their enterprises and make Mangalore regain its past glory as a vital boat building centre. Apart from shipbuilding there exists lot of potential for the ship repairs as well. If a good draft of about 4 to 4.5m (below chart datum) is provided in the river channel vessels up to 100m length can be easily taken alongside for repairs.



2. The inland waterway budget should also provide direct dredged access to the sea where the present BDIL is located. A floating bridge can be erected across the sand bar for regular vehicular traffic movement and may be opened to vessels passing only when needed. This sea access has to be turned into a dry dock on the BDIL side, resulting in connected economic benefits of the ship repair and servicing industry.
3. After the Kulur bridge towards Maravoor, the area is very much suitable for fish farming, and this activity can have considerable potential for employment and economic development.
4. There is a good scope for promoting fish meal and fish oil industries in specific areas along the river banks. A couple of such industries exist on the sand bar of the Netravati on the southern side. If the waterway is established, this industry can be localised here and processed immediately. The raw materials in the form of non-edible catches are available at the fishing harbour instead of the fish being transported to distant processing centres located in the hinterland.
5. There are already seven floating restaurants operational on the Netravati river. These restaurants are not able to ply further into the river since suitable waterways are not available. The proposed waterway should develop tourism along the same lines as Ha Long Bay of Vietnam, thereby generating employment and connected economic benefits to the region. The development of this waterway would increase the tourism activities in this region.
6. It would develop the Riverbanks to load and unload various goods, including arecanut, fish, and other agri-commodity. As everyone is aware, transportation by Water is much cheaper than Road transport.
7. The waterway can give a fillip to water sports like windsurfing, boating, stand-up paddling, etc., which can benefit the region's sporting community.
8. Riverfront Development: The development of riverfronts typically includes the following activities:
  - o Boat trips
  - o Shopping & Petty shops
  - o Restaurants
  - o Theme parks
  - o Parking lots
  - o Walkways & Sit outs



The increasing pace of urbanization and industrialization has left many towns/cities with minimum avenues for recreation and open green spaces. A developed waterfront trail would provide residents access to new recreation opportunities and an expanded awareness of the natural aspects of river life. The waterfront would attract a growing legion of morning walkers and after-work runners. Added to this, public access sites connected by linear greenways will tie developments together, eliminating barriers, both real and imagined and animate the waterfront with the light and life of the city. The greenway-cum-recreational corridor that may well be a star tourist attraction in future.

9. Mangalore Smart City Limited has made a significant allocation of funds for waterfront development. Plans are afoot to make the city look outwards towards the sea and the rivers from the current status of having its back towards the waterfront. These waterways will complement the plans of MSCL projects and plan for the development of the District.

**Prayer:**

If the waterways are established, immense benefits for economic activities connected to the movement of cargo, men and material, small shipbuilding and boat building, fisheries, fish meal and fish oil, tourism and water sports will accrue. We request you to kindly allocate the budget for the development of the same so that the region's all-around economic activity will benefit immensely.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully

**For Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

**ISAAC VAS  
PRESIDENT  
DIN 00712781**

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