

DETAILED REPORT ON THE VISIT TO NATIONAL INLAND NAVIGATION INSTITUTE (NINI), PATNA

Visit Date: 13 October 2026

Visiting Delegation:

1. Shri Sushil Mansing Khopde, IPS, Additional Director General of Maritime Administration (ADDL. DG, DGMA)
2. Shri Bijendra Choubey, Shipping Master, Kolkata

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Visit

Shri Sushil Mansing Khopde, IPS, Additional Director General of Maritime Administration, visited the National Inland Navigation Institute (NINI), Patna, Bihar, on 13 October 2026, accompanied by Shri Bijendra Choubey, Shipping Master, Kolkata.

The purpose of the visit was to see the Institute's training infrastructure, academic and practical facilities, simulation systems, and its role in developing skilled manpower for the inland water transport (IWT) sector and possible transition career pathways and employment opportunities.

The visit also provided an opportunity to interact with the Institute's officials on the present status and future prospects of inland water transportation, employment opportunities for trained inland vessel crew, the scope for strengthening maritime training at NINI, and the possibility of establishing a structured pathway between inland vessel (IV) crew, River Sea Vessel, Near Coastal Vessel and foreign-going (FG) vessel operations through appropriate training and certification.

2. Reception and Ceremonial Welcome

On arrival at the NINI campus, the visiting delegation was formally received and a Guard of Honour was presented by NINI cadets. The cadets' disciplined participation reflected the Institute's emphasis on discipline, professionalism, and the development of a responsible maritime workforce.

A ceremonial lamp-lighting ceremony was then held in the presence of the visiting delegation and Institute officials. The ceremony symbolised the pursuit of knowledge, learning, professional excellence, and the continued development of inland navigation and maritime training in the country.

The delegation was briefed on NINI's role and objectives, its training programmes, and its contribution to developing skilled personnel for inland vessel operations.

3. Visit of the Institute's Infrastructure and Training Facilities

The visiting delegation was shown around the campus including the academic, technical, administrative, residential, and practical training facilities available at NINI.

3.1 Academic and Simulation Facilities

The campus tour covered classrooms, the library, faculty section, the Inland Vessel Management System (IVMS) simulator and the dredging simulator. Institute officials explained classroom teaching arrangements and the integration of theoretical instruction with practical exercises and simulation. The library supports the learning needs of trainees and faculty, while the faculty section supports course delivery, academic preparation, practical instruction, assessment and continuous improvement of training programmes.

The Head of Department (HOD) demonstrated the IVMS simulator and explained its operational features and relevance to inland vessel training. The simulation facility provides a controlled environment for practising vessel operating procedures and developing situational awareness. Faculty members also explained the dredging simulator, including its applications in familiarising trainees with dredging operations, equipment, operational situations and dredging efficiency and dredge management plan.

3.2 Technical Laboratories and Safety Training

The technical facilities included the electrical, navigation and hydraulic laboratories and the fire mock-up structure. The electrical laboratory provides practical exposure to electrical systems and equipment relevant to vessel operations. The navigation laboratory supports instruction in navigation-related subjects, equipment and procedures, with emphasis on safe operations and professional competence. The hydraulic laboratory supports understanding of hydraulic systems used in vessel and dredging machinery. The fire mock-up structure supports practical safety familiarisation, emergency-response awareness and the application of prescribed on-board safety procedures, where applicable in compliance with STCW requirements.

3.3 Residential and Administrative Facilities

The visit also covered the swimming pool, hostel, mess and administrative section. Institute officials explained the arrangements for residential training, including the importance of discipline, physical fitness, personal development and a structured learning environment. The administrative section supports admissions, training coordination, examination-related activities, trainee records and general institutional operations.

The campus tour provided an overview of NINI's academic, technical, simulation-based, safety, residential and administrative training capabilities, with explanations from Institute officials on the purpose and use of each facility.

4. Interaction on Courses, Admission, Training and Certification

During the campus inspection, ADDL DG made enquiries regarding NINI's functioning and the training programmes offered by the Institute. The areas discussed included:

Areas discussed

- Courses conducted by NINI and their objectives.
- Categories of candidates admitted to the Institute.
- Admission procedures and eligibility requirements for new entrants.
- Minimum and maximum age criteria applicable to different courses.
- Medical fitness requirements and minimum educational qualifications.
- Eligibility and training requirements for existing inland vessel personnel seeking further certification.
- Training, assessment, and examination procedures followed by the Institute.
- Course fees and other applicable course-related requirements.
- Placement procedures and employment prospects for candidates completing GP Rating training.
- Employment opportunities available to trained inland vessel crew.

4.1 Observations from the Interaction

The delegation and Institute officials discussed the employment-oriented nature of the training programmes, particularly GP Rating training, Preparatory Courses for Certificate of Competence and the importance of connecting trained candidates with suitable employment opportunities. The interaction helped clarify the training and employment pathway from admission through training, assessment, certification, and placement.

5. Discussion on Inland Water Transportation and Employment Opportunities

The discussion focused on the potential of inland water transportation in India, the availability of cargo suitable for movement through inland waterways, and the scope for increasing the use of waterways as an important mode of transport.

The delegation and Institute officials exchanged views on the need to develop a trained workforce to support the expansion of inland water transportation. The availability of skilled and appropriately certified personnel is essential for the safe and efficient operation of inland vessels.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of connecting training institutions with the operational requirements of vessel owners, cargo operators, and other stakeholders in the IWT sector. NINI's role in preparing candidates for inland vessel operations and the need to strengthen the relationship between training, certification, and employment were also considered.

ADDL. DG, DGMA expressed interest in the wider employment potential of the sector and in possible ways to improve professional opportunities for trained inland vessel personnel through the River Sea Vessel and Near Coastal Vessel streams.

6. Proposal for Establishing a Linkage between Inland Vessel and Foreign-Going Vessel Crew

An important subject discussed during the interaction was the possibility of developing a structured linkage between inland vessel (IV) crew and foreign-going (FG) vessel crew.

ADDL. DG, DGMA expressed interest in examining whether suitably qualified and experienced inland vessel personnel could have a pathway to employment aboard foreign-going vessels after completing any additional training, assessments, medical examinations, and certification requirements applicable to such employment.

Inland vessel personnel acquire practical experience in vessel operations, and some of their skills may be relevant to wider maritime employment. However, the requirements for foreign-going vessels differ from those applicable to inland vessels, particularly in respect of training standards, competency certification, safety courses, medical fitness, sea service, and other statutory requirements.

A structured bridging mechanism needs to be re-examined to identify additional competencies and training modules needed to address gaps between existing inland vessel qualifications and the requirements for Near Coastal Vessel and foreign-going vessel employment.

NINI shall submit a proposal to the Additional Director General, DGMA, outlining the existing statutory provisions governing the transition of certified Inland Vessel personnel to River-Sea Vessels (RSV), Near Coastal Voyages (NCV), and Foreign-Going (FG) shipping, and identifying any statutory amendments or regulatory interventions required to establish a structured career progression pathway.

7. Discussion on DG Shipping Approval and Revival of Courses at NINI

The delegation and Institute officials discussed the scope for strengthening NINI's training activities through the resumption of courses requiring approval from the Directorate General of Shipping (DG Shipping). ADDL. DG, DGMA indicated an interest in assisting, within the applicable framework, with understanding the relevant DG Shipping requirements in relation to courses for which approval had lapsed or required renewal.

NINI informed the delegation that it had already submitted an application to DG Shipping for resumption of the lapsed approved courses. Procurement of the required infrastructure and the necessary approvals for conducting exit examinations were stated to be in progress. After completion of the infrastructure development and procurement process, NINI intends to request DG Shipping to conduct the requisite inspection.

ADDL. DG, DGMA agreed to provide the necessary guidance and support to NINI for approval to conduct DG Shipping Approved courses at the Institute.

8. Key Outcomes and Proposed Follow-up Action

The visit enabled constructive discussions on several areas of collaborative and transition paths for training, certification and employment of Inland Vessel trained manpower across the inland, coastal and ocean going sectors. The follow-up actions on the matters outlined below is to be undertaken:

Proposal by NINI on transition pathways

A proposal outlining the existing statutory provisions governing the transition of certified Inland Vessel personnel to River-Sea Vessels (RSV), Near Coastal Voyages (NCV), and Foreign-Going (FG) shipping, and identifying any statutory amendments or regulatory interventions required to establish a structured career progression pathways to be submitted by NINI to ADDL. DG, DGMA.