Goa plans to revive inland waterway passenger ship service, says minister

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The Goa government is planning to revive the inland waterway passenger ship service connecting rural areas to cities in the coastal state, Ports Minister Michael Lobo has said.

Such a ferry service was operational in Goa during the Portuguese rule, but was discontinued after the liberation of the state in 1961. Currently, the state river navigation department runs boat services to ferry people on short routes.

Lobo told PTI on Saturday that floating jetties were being constructed across the state for the use of inland waterways to ferry people using small ships. "We recently inaugurated the country's first floating jetty in Panaji. Similar jetties are coming up at three other locations," he said.

"We want to make maximum use of inland waterways because the existing roads are totally congested. Even after converting them into six-lane roads, decongestion is difficult," Mr. Lobo said.

The inland waterways will provide the "fastest and easiest" connectivity to people across Goa, he said, adding destinations like Morjim in North Goa district would be connected with these ferry services.

As part of the project, dredging work on parts of some rivers will start soon, the minister said."We will slightly dredge the river. It will not be a capital dredging.

Mr. Lobo said there is a lot to be explored through the inland waterways. "We have a huge network of rivers. We have to re-explore these rivers to bring back the golden days when people used to travel through such ferry services,"