



Boosting Lighthouse Tourism in India

For Prelims: [Maritime India Vision \(MIV\) 2030](#), Rigveda, [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#), Lighthouse, [Mamallapuram](#), [Sagarmala initiative](#)

For Mains: Boosting lighthouse tourism, Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030, Growth & Development, Sustainable tourism practices

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Why in News?

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways announced plans to [boost lighthouse tourism](#) under [Maritime India Vision \(MIV\) 2030](#) and [Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047](#) in India during a stakeholders meeting organised by the **Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships** in Vizhinjam, Kerala.

What is a Lighthouse?

- **About:** A lighthouse is a tower, building, or other type of structure designed to emit light from a system of lamps and lenses and used as an aid to navigation for mariners and local fisherman. Lighthouses mark dangerous coastlines, hazardous shoals, reefs, safe entries to harbours.
 - Currently, India has established & maintaining **194 lighthouses** along the coastal line & Islands of Indian waters.
- **Historical Role:**
 - **Ancient India:** The **Rigveda** and **Satapatha Brahmana** mention navigation in the Purva (East) and Paschima (West) Samudra. The Rigveda also describes sea voyages by Varuna and Vashistha.
 - **Mythological Connections:** The story of 'Manu,' being rescued from a flood, highlights early Indian knowledge of sea and navigation.
 - In the **7th century A.D.**, **Pallava king Narasimhavarman-I** established a lighthouse at [Mamallapuram \(Mahabalipuram\)](#), using log fires to guide ships.
 - This lighthouse offers stunning views of the shore temple complex, a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).
 - **Significant Modern Marvels:**

Lighthouse	Description	Image
Tangasseri Lighthouse,	The tallest lighthouse in Kerala , constructed by the	//

Kollam, Kerala	British. It is painted in white and red bands, making it a fascinating sight.	
Mahabalipuram Lighthouse, Tamil Nadu	An old lighthouse from the colonial period , built next to an ancient lighthouse commissioned by Mahendra Pallava of the Pallava dynasty. Though non-functional, it is open for visitors to explore.	
Kaup Beach Lighthouse, Udupi, Karnataka	The existing lighthouse was constructed by the British in 1901 and has undergone various improvements over the years, including the installation of different lighting equipment.	
Vizhinjam Lighthouse, Kovalam, Kerala	A lighted beacon was established in nearby Kolachal in 1925, and a day mark beacon was provided at Vizhinjam in 1960. A major lighthouse was completed in 1972 it is One of the oldest and most picturesque lighthouses in India.	
Fort Aguada Lighthouse, Goa	A well-preserved Portuguese structure and one of Goa's prime attractions. It offers dreamy sea views, making it a must-visit spot.	
Chandrabhaga, Odisha.	Chandrabhaga lighthouse, located near Konark temple , has endured severe cyclones like the Super Cyclone (1999), Phailin (2013), and Fani (2019).	

Note

In the 3rd century B.C., **Ptolemy II built the famous Pharos of Alexandria (Lighthouse of Alexandria), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.**

- The tower, made of high-quality kedan stone bricks embedded in molten lead, was operated for 1600 years. In the 13th century AD, it collapsed due to a severe earthquake.

What is the Role of Modern Lighthouses in India?

- Modern lighthouses continue to guide ships, mark ports, and send signals, serving as valuable backups to [GPS technology](#).
- After the [2008 Mumbai terror attacks](#), lighthouses were equipped with **state-of-the-art radars for coastal surveillance**.
- The Indian government established the [Automatic Identification System \(AIS\)](#) to facilitate communication between fishermen and lighthouses.
- The **Marine Aids to Navigation Act of 2021** aimed to promote the historical and cultural value of lighthouses.
- Events like the **Indian Lighthouse Festival in Goa** showcase the heritage and tourism potential of these structures. Many lighthouses are now tourist attractions, offering historical insights and stunning views.

Modern Navigational Aids

- **Light Vessels:** These floating aids mark isolated shoals or submerged dangers used where lighthouse construction is impractical. Equipped with lanterns and optical equipment, they neutralise vessel inclinations due to waves.
- **Buoys:** Buoys provide navigational directions to mariners. Initially using acetylene gas, they now operate on electric lights powered by solar photovoltaic modules.
- **M.F Radio Beacons:** Installed between 1955-60, these were replaced by the Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) for improved accuracy in maritime positioning.
- **Racons:** These radar transponder beacons return a distinctive code signal to ship radar, providing range, bearing, and identification data.

What are the Benefits of Boosting Lighthouse Tourism in India?

- **Cultural Heritage:** Lighthouses offer historical and cultural value, making them educational hubs and events like **India's First Lighthouse Festival "the Bharatiya Prakash Sthamb Utsav"**, held at the historic Fort Aguada in Goa celebrates India's rich maritime heritage, promoting awareness and appreciation of historical lighthouses that have been largely ignored.
 - Under the [Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021](#), certain lighthouses may be designated as heritage sites, expanding their roles beyond navigation aids to cultural and educational purposes.
 - Visiting a lighthouse offers a glimpse into their **centuries-long role in trade, conquest, and travel**. Lighthouses provide unique vantage points for enjoying seaside sunsets and learning about maritime history.
- **Economic Development:** The [Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships](#) has identified **75 lighthouses for potential investment in tourism development, promising economic benefits to surrounding areas**.
 - This initiative highlights investment potential through [Public-Private Partnerships \(PPP\)](#), encouraging private entities to invest in developing these sites as tourist destinations.
 - Increased tourism can lead to higher footfall in coastal areas, benefiting local vendors, restaurants, and service providers.
- **Environmental Awareness:** **The focus on heritage lighthouses promotes eco-friendly tourism practices that can protect coastal environments while drawing visitors.**
 - The initiative aims to transform lighthouses into multifaceted tourist destinations, offering diverse experiences beyond traditional beach tourism.

Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships

- The Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships, under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, provides aids to **marine navigation along the Indian coast**. It is **headquartered in Noida**, with regional headquarters in nine districts (Gandhidham, Jamnagar, Mumbai, Goa, Cochin, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Kolkata and Port Blair).
- The aim is to ensure **safe and secure navigation in Indian waters** through visual aids such as lighthouses, light vessels, buoys, and beacons, as well as radio aids like DGPS and RACONS.
- The Directorate also provides **Vessel Traffic Service for interactive navigation control**. It is responsible for maintaining general aids to marine navigation as per the **Lighthouse Act 1927**, while local aids are maintained by **Maritime State Government organisations**.
 - The **Directorate offers technical support for maintenance of local lights** and may take over maintenance if international standards are not met due to financial constraints or lack of technical personnel.

What is the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030?

- Maritime India Vision 2030 is a ten-year blueprint for the maritime sector in India, released by the

Prime Minister at the **Maritime India Summit in November 2020**. It aims to boost waterways, shipbuilding industry, and cruise tourism.

- The Maritime India Vision 2030 highlights essential themes for India to secure its position in the global maritime sector. It will supersede the **Sagarmala initiative** and aims to boost waterways and encourage cruise tourism in India.
 - MIV 2030 has identified key interventions in 4 areas: **brownfield capacity augmentation, developing world-class Mega Ports, development of transshipment hub in Southern India, and infrastructure modernisation.**
 - India aims to achieve a **5% share in world exports in the next 5 to 10 years**, requiring aggressive growth in exports. To achieve this, Indian Ports need to improve maritime capabilities and **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)**. Key interventions include creating a **National Logistics Portal (Marine)**, digitising processes across maritime stakeholders, implementing digital-led smart ports, and monitoring port performance through system-driven approaches.
 - **Enhance logistics efficiency and cost competitiveness** through 200+ port connectivity projects, mechanisation, technology adoption, evacuation time reduction, cost reduction, coastal shipping promotion, and portland industrialization.
 - MIV 2030 aims to **improve governance mechanisms**, amend existing laws, strengthen the **Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)**, and promote PPP, fiscal support, and financial resilience to support sustainable growth in the maritime sector.
 - India aims to become the leading seafaring nation by focusing on education, research, and training. Currently contributing **10-12% of the world's seafarers**, India faces increasing competition from countries like the Philippines.
 - Key interventions include promoting research and innovation, improving education and training, and creating a favourable environment for seafarers and port capability development.
 - India aims to achieve 40% of its national energy from renewable sources by 2030 and its **ports need to align with the International Marine Organization's goals for safe, efficient, and sustainable ports.**
 - The MIV 2030 has identified key interventions to enhance India's position as a leader in safe, sustainable, and green ports, including increasing renewable energy usage, reducing air emissions, optimising water usage, improving waste management, implementing a **Zero accident safety program, and establishing a centralised monitoring system.**

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the historical significance of lighthouses in India and their role in maritime navigation. How can boosting lighthouse tourism contribute to preserving this heritage and boost India's economy?