



## 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

**Source:** [PIB](#)






### 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 <b>tallest lighthouse in Kerala</b> , constructed by the	<a href="#">//</a>

<b>Kollam, Kerala</b>	British. It is painted in white and red bands, making it a fascinating sight.	
<b>Mahabalipuram Lighthouse, Tamil Nadu</b>	An <b>old lighthouse from the colonial period</b> , built next to an ancient lighthouse commissioned by Mahendra Pallava of the Pallava dynasty. Though non-functional, it is open for visitors to explore.	
<b>Kaup Beach Lighthouse, Udupi, Karnataka</b>	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.	
<b>Vizhinjam Lighthouse, Kovalam, Kerala</b>	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.	
<b>Fort Aguada Lighthouse, Goa</b>	A well-preserved <b>Portuguese structure</b> and one of Goa's prime attractions. It offers dreamy sea views, making it a must-visit spot.	
<b>Chandrabhaga, Odisha.</b>	Chandrabhaga lighthouse, located near Konark <a href="#">temple</a> , 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?