



National Maritime Day 2021

Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways celebrated the **58th National Maritime Day (5th April)**.

- [Maritime India Vision-2030](#), was also discussed at the occasion.

Key Points

▪ About:

- National Maritime Day is celebrated **every year on 5th April** to commemorate the maiden voyage of the **first Indian flag merchant vessel 'S.S LOYALTY'** from Mumbai to London, on **April 5th, 1919**.

▪ 2021 Theme:

- **'Sustainable Shipping beyond Covid-19'**.

▪ Significance:

- It is celebrated **to encourage the merchant shipping industry of India**. Shipping contributes a lot to the country's economy.
- At present, **90% of India's international trade in terms of volume** and **77% in terms of value is moved by sea**.

▪ Other Initiatives:

◦ Sagarmala Initiative:

- The [Sagarmala Programme](#) was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015 which **aims at holistic port infrastructure development along the 7,516-km long coastline through modernisation, mechanisation and computerisation**.

◦ Project Unnati:

- The shipping ministry launched Project Unnati in 2014 under which efficiency of equipment was studied and every activity was scrutinised to identify excesses/mistakes.

◦ Blue Economy Policy:

- The policy document highlights the [blue economy](#) as one of the ten core dimensions for national growth and it **emphasizes policies across several key sectors to achieve holistic growth of India's economy**.

◦ Joined International Maritime Organization:

- India is also a member of the [International Maritime Organization \(IMO\)](#).
- IMO is a specialized agency of the [United Nations \(UN\)](#). It is a global standard-setting authority with responsibility to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.

◦ National Waterways:

- As per the [National Waterways Act 2016](#), 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs).

◦ The Sagar-Manthan:

- Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre has been launched.
- It is an information system **for enhancing maritime safety, search and rescue capabilities, security and marine environment protection**.

◦ Ship Repair Clusters:

- They will be developed along both coasts by **2022**.
- **Ship Recycling:**
 - Domestic ship recycling industry will also be promoted to create '[Wealth from Waste](#)'.
 - India has enacted **Recycling of Ships Act, 2019** and agreed to the [Hong Kong Convention for Ship Recycling](#).

Maritime India Vision 2030

▪ About:

- It is a **ten-year blueprint for the maritime sector** which was released by the Prime Minister of India at the [Maritime India Summit 2021](#).
- It will supersede the **Sagarmala initiative** and aims to boost [waterways](#), give a fillip to the shipbuilding industry and encourage cruise tourism in India.

▪ Policy Initiatives and Development Projects:

- **Maritime Development Fund:**
 - A **Rs. 25,000-crore fund**, which will provide low cost, long-tenure financing to the sector with the Centre contributing Rs. 2,500 crore over seven years.
- **Port Regulatory Authority:**
 - A **pan-India port authority** will be set up under the new Indian Ports Act (to replace the old Indian Ports Act 1908) for enabling oversight across major and non-major ports, enhance institutional coverage for ports and provide for structured growth of the ports sector to boost investor confidence.
- **Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid Project:**
 - It aims to **develop regional connectivity** with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.
- **Riverine Development Fund:**
 - Calls for extending low cost, long-term financing for inland vessels with the support of a **Riverine Development Fund (RDF)** and for extending the coverage of the **tonnage tax scheme** (applicable to ocean-going ships and dredgers) to inland vessels to enhance the availability of such vessels.
- **Rationalisation of Port Charges:**
 - It **will make them more competitive**, besides doing away with all hidden charges levied by ship liners to bring in more transparency.
- **Promotion of Water Transport:**
 - For decongestion of urban areas, and **developing waterways as an alternative means of urban transport**.

[Source:PIB](#)

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