



**Research Unit**  
Press Information Bureau  
Government of India

## India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024

**Celebrating India's Seafaring Legacy and Vision for the Future**

**13 December 2024**

*Be it for spices, beads, jewellery, cotton, or the richness of our culture, the thriving sea-lanes served as bridges of commercial and intellectual exchange. For centuries, this nurtured global trade, providing a pathway to the growth and prosperity of many nations. That a historic consensus has been reached on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor during the G-20 Summit reflects the linkages of the past with our present and future!*

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**

The **1st India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC 2024)**, a landmark event organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) was held on **December 11-12, 2024**. This prestigious gathering celebrated India's illustrious maritime legacy and its profound contributions to global trade, culture, and innovation. Bringing together ministers, experts, and dignitaries from around the world, the conclave served as a vibrant platform for dialogue and collaboration, reaffirming India's enduring maritime heritage and its pivotal role in shaping the global maritime narrative.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://x.com/shipmin\\_india/status/1859063642810896679](https://x.com/shipmin_india/status/1859063642810896679)

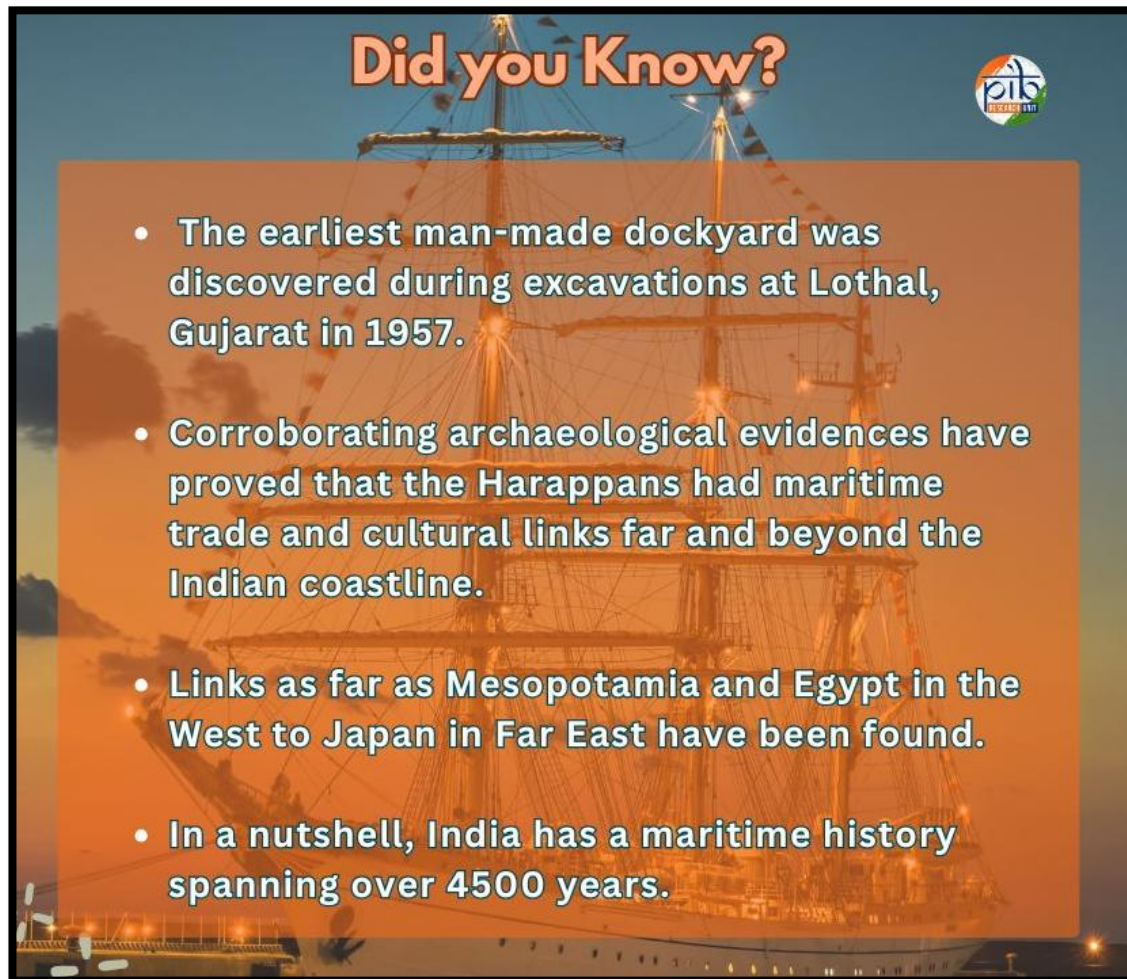


## India's Maritime Heritage

India's maritime heritage is deeply rooted in its ancient traditions and rich history, with references to maritime activities found as early as the Rig Veda. Indian mythology abounds with tales of the ocean, rivers, and the bounty they bestow upon humanity, symbolizing the profound connection between mankind and the seas. Evidence from Indian literature, art, sculpture, painting, and archaeology underscores the existence of a vibrant maritime tradition that shaped the nation's identity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.joinindiannavy.gov.in/en/about-us/maritime-heritage.html>



Modern India's maritime prowess manifests across all domains with its impressive **7,500 km coastline, 13 major ports, and 200 non-major ports**, establishing it as an undisputed maritime powerhouse. Indian port's remarkable annual handling capacity of **1,200 million tonnes of cargo** underscores the maritime sector's pivotal role in our economic landscape. The maritime sector facilitates an extraordinary **95% of India's trade volume, and that accounts for 70% of its value**, capitalising on our strategic Indian Ocean position.

### India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024

The **1st India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC 2024)** centered around the theme, "*Towards Understanding India's Position in Global Maritime History.*" This landmark event convened key ministers, eminent speakers, maritime experts, and thought leaders from across the globe to illuminate India's illustrious seafaring legacy. The discussions underscored India's pivotal role in fostering cultural and economic exchanges throughout history, while also exploring its forward-looking vision for sustainable maritime innovation. The conclave not only celebrated India's historical maritime achievements but also highlighted its aspirations as an emerging maritime

<sup>3</sup> <https://nmhc.in/about-us/#about-nmhc>



powerhouse on the global stage.

The keynote sessions and panel discussions on India's maritime legacy seamlessly interconnected, offering a comprehensive exploration of the nation's historic contributions to global trade, culture, and innovation. Representatives from **11 countries** joined the two-day conclave held in the capital, highlighting the event's international significance.



The poster for the India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024 features a large image of a traditional wooden ship under construction on the left. At the top left, logos for the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sagarmala, and the National Maritime Heritage Complex are displayed. The title 'INDIA MARITIME HERITAGE CONCLAVE 2024' is prominently shown in the top right. The central theme is 'Objectives:', followed by five numbered points:

- 1 Showcase at one place entire India's Maritime Legacy:**
  - Highlight India's advancements in shipbuilding, navigation, and maritime trade.
- 2 Global Cultural Confluence:**
  - Trace cultural, religious, and economic confluence between India and Southeast Asia, Far East Asia, West Asia, the Mediterranean, Africa, Europe and beyond.
- 3 Technological Evolution:**
  - Explore India's contributions to maritime technology, from ancient times through various cultural phases till date.
- 4 Spiritual and Cultural Exchange:**
  - Discuss India's role in spreading philosophies and practices through maritime routes.
- 5 Maritime Heritage Preservation:**
  - Raise awareness about the conservation of maritime archaeological sites, monuments artefacts, ancient ports, lighthouses etc.

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An exhibition featuring over **20 stalls** showcased India's shipbuilding techniques, navigation systems, and historical trade routes, inaugurated by distinguished dignitaries. The first day concluded with a vibrant cultural program celebrating India's coastal traditions, blending scholarship with festivity. Key themes such as skill development, youth engagement, and cultural preservation aligned with India's broader developmental goals, making IMHC 2024 a meaningful tribute to the nation's maritime legacy.

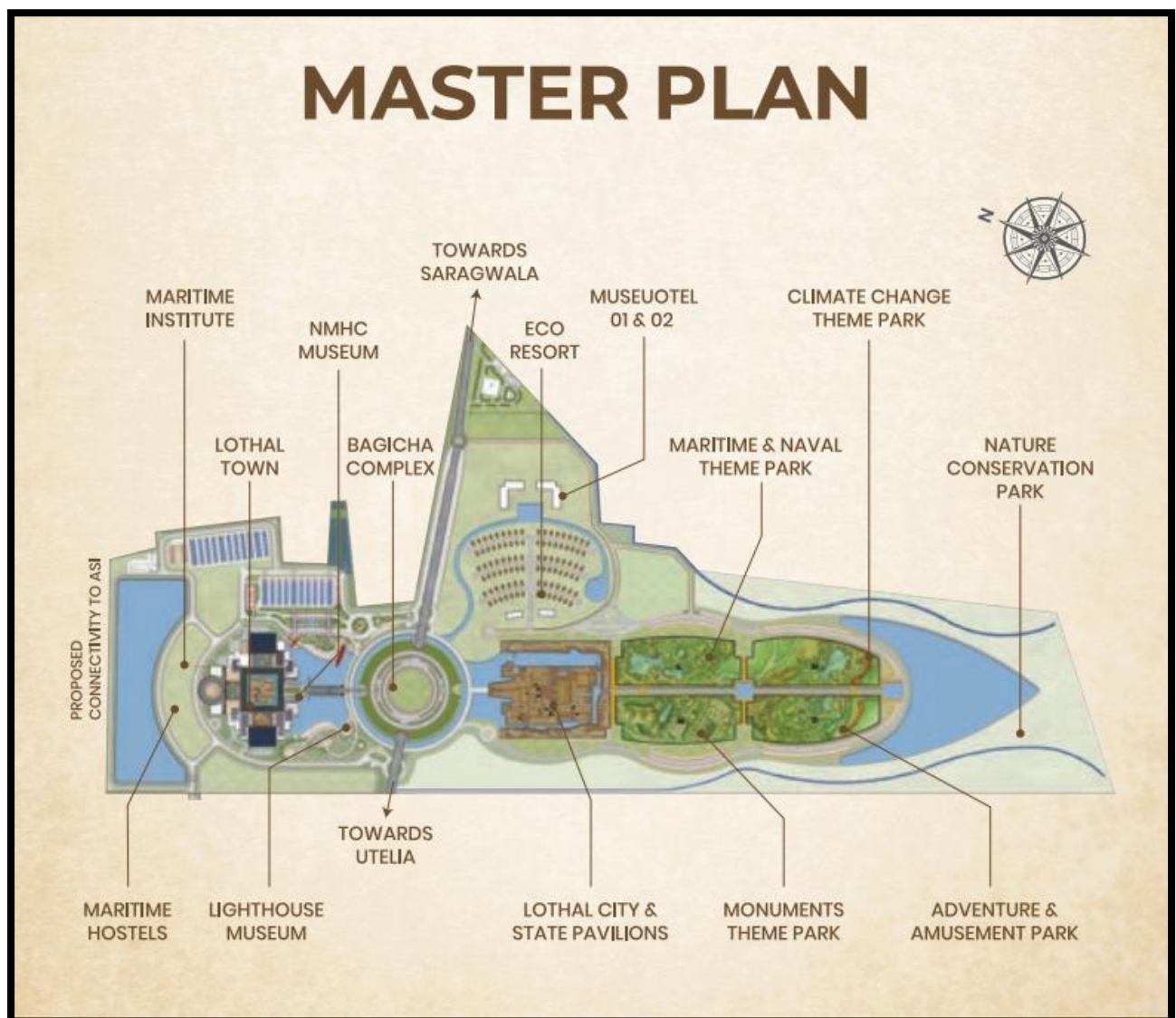
The two-day long India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) drew a successful closure with focus on highlighting India's maritime history. Prominent maritime nations, including **Greece, Italy, and**

<sup>4</sup> [https://x.com/NMHC\\_Lothal/status/1865621699594461367/photo/1](https://x.com/NMHC_Lothal/status/1865621699594461367/photo/1)

the UK, joined hands at IMHC to celebrate India's maritime heritage, underscoring its global significance. A key highlight of the day was the emphasis on the upcoming **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)** in Lothal, which will showcase India's ancient maritime techniques, including shipbuilding and bead-making, reflecting the nation's role as a global connector.

### National Maritime Heritage Complex

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is developing a **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal**. It is one of the prominent cities of the ancient Harappan civilization dating to **2600 BCE**. Here, archaeological excavations have discovered the oldest manmade dockyard, over **5000 years old**. Setting up a maritime heritage complex at such an important location will benefit the historical importance of Lothal and help it develop into a place of extraordinary and unparalleled maritime heritage.



Master Plan of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal

## A Roadmap for the Future

The conclave not only celebrated India's maritime achievements but also outlined a path for the future. With its robust coastline, advanced ports, and ambitious initiatives like the National Maritime Heritage Conclave, India is poised to become a maritime leader. The discussions on sustainable blue economy practices further reinforced the vision of a resilient maritime sector driving India's economic and cultural resurgence.

### References

<https://www.joinindiannavy.gov.in/en/about-us/maritime-heritage.html>

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