



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM IN INDIA

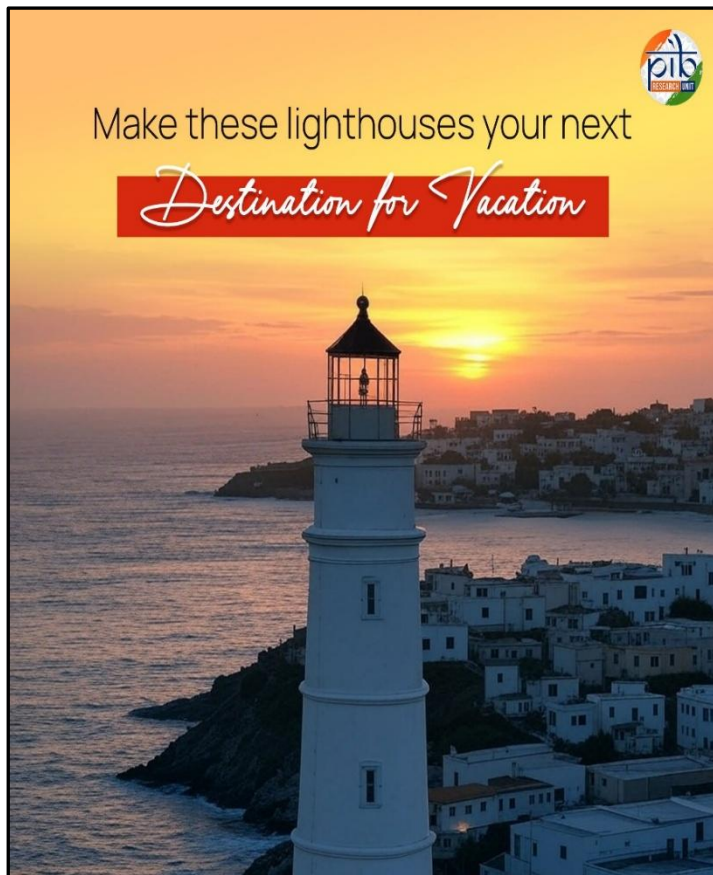
A Beacon of Maritime Heritage and Economic Growth

(Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways)

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Introduction

With a coastline spanning **over 7,500 kilometres**, India is home to **204 lighthouses** that silently guard its rich maritime heritage. Traditionally serving as **navigational aids** for seafarers, these iconic structures are now being reimagined as **tourism destinations** under the Government of India's developmental vision. This initiative aims to **preserve the historical and architectural significance** of lighthouses and **unlock their potential** for **economic growth** and **community empowerment**.



What is Lighthouse Tourism?

Lighthouse tourism involves transforming lighthouses and their surrounding areas into vibrant tourist attractions. These structures, often located in scenic coastal or island settings, offer visitors a unique combination of natural beauty, maritime history, and recreational opportunities.

The **Central Government** is actively promoting lighthouse tourism as a part of its broader **Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030** and **Amrit Kaal vision 2047** to **enhance India's cultural heritage and maritime legacy**.

By developing these sites, the government seeks to enhance India's tourism offerings while creating employment opportunities and fostering local economic growth.

The Potential of Lighthouse Tourism in India


India's lighthouses are not merely functional structures but repositories of history and culture. Their potential as tourist destinations stems from several key factors:

- ✓ **Strategic Locations:** Many lighthouses are situated in breathtaking locations along India's coastline or remote islands, offering panoramic sea views.
- ✓ **Cultural Importance:** Some lighthouses date back centuries and are near UNESCO World Heritage Sites like Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu or other prominent cultural landmarks.
- ✓ **Adventure and Leisure:** These sites can host activities such as trekking, boating, and water sports, appealing to adventure seekers.
- ✓ **Economic Impact:** Developing lighthouse tourism can generate hospitality, transportation, and handicraft employment while boosting local economies.

Recognising this potential, the government has identified lighthouse tourism as a priority area for development. The initiative aligns with the broader objectives of enhancing India's global appeal as a travel destination while promoting sustainable tourism practices.

In February 2024, **PM Narendra Modi** dedicated **75 Lighthouses** with tourist facilities in 10 states & UTs. With an investment of **₹60 crore**, these 75 iconic lighthouses have been developed. Each lighthouse has become a beacon of both heritage and recreation, with modern amenities such as museums, amphitheatres, children's parks, and more. In the fiscal year 2023-24 alone, these 75 dedicated lighthouses attracted an impressive **16 lakh visitors**, a rise of more than **400% footfall** of tourists from 4 lakhs in 2014. As of September 2024, the current fiscal year 2024-25 has already welcomed more than **10 lakh visitors**. More than 500,000 tourists visited the Lighthouses between April and June, 2024, validating the vision of transforming these iconic maritime structures into vibrant tourists hotspots as envisioned by PM Narendra Modi.

These developments have also resulted in job creation, with **150 direct and 500 indirect employment** opportunities emerging in nearby hotels, restaurants, tour operators, transportation services, and local shops and artisans.



Significance Of **Lighthouse** Tourism in India

A 400% rise in footfall, from **4 lakh visitors in 2014** to **16 lakhs in 2023-24**

Dedicated 75 iconic lighthouses across 9 coastal states and 1 union territory, lighthouses now feature museums, amphitheatres, and parks, enhancing their appeal.

As of September 2024, the current fiscal year 2024-25 has already welcomed more than **10 lakh visitors**.

Creation of over **150 direct and 500 indirect jobs** in hospitality, transport, and local crafts for the local communities.




IMAGE SOURCE: Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism)

Steps Taken By The Indian Government To Boost Lighthouse Tourism

1. Indian Lighthouse Festival Series

The **1st Indian Lighthouse Festival**, “**Bharatiya Prakash Stambh Utsav**”, was inaugurated on **23rd September, 2023** by the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, **Shri Sarbananda Sonowal** and Goa Chief Minister, **Shri Pramod Sawant** at the historic **Fort Aguada in Goa**. It has been held **annually** since then, serving as a **key platform** to **celebrate** and **promote lighthouse tourism**.



The **2nd Indian Lighthouse Festival** was held in **Odisha**. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, **Shri Sarbananda Sonowal**, was also joined by Odisha Chief Minister, **Mohan Charan Majhi**. Shri Sonowal dedicated **two new lighthouses at Chaumuck (Balasore) and Dhamra (Bhadrak)** and emphasized empowering coastal communities to preserve and promote lighthouses as part of India’s rich maritime heritage.



2. Stakeholders Meet

Shri Sarbananda Sonowal chaired a Stakeholders Meeting to boost Lighthouse Tourism in Kerala in July 2024. The meet was aimed at conceptualising & strategising to showcase the unique tourism potential of lighthouses as spots of historical, cultural and scenic confluence. This meet underscored government’s commitment to promote lighthouse tourism and revitalise these iconic structures as vibrant tourist destinations.

The government’s commitment to lighthouse tourism is also evident from its efforts under the **Sagarmala Programme** and its focus on fostering partnerships with private stakeholders. It exemplifies integrated development, blending infrastructure growth, sustainability, and community welfare to drive India’s maritime and economic progress. **The Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL)** actively collaborates with private players to ensure these projects meet international standards while safeguarding environmental sustainability.

The government plans to establish a national framework to empower the coastal communities and ensure sustainable development around lighthouses.

Way Forward

To fully realise the potential of lighthouse tourism in India, the government has outlined several forward-looking strategies:

- **Sustainable Development:** Emphasis on eco-friendly practices to protect fragile coastal ecosystems while promoting responsible tourism.
- **Integration with Coastal Circuits:** Lighthouses are incorporated into broader coastal tourism itineraries to enhance their appeal.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Digital initiatives are being launched to showcase lighthouse destinations to domestic and international audiences.
- **Skill Development:** Training programs are being introduced to equip local communities with skills required for employment in hospitality and tourism-related sectors.

These initiatives align with **Prime Minister Modi's vision of “Atmanirbhar Bharat” (self-reliant India)** and aim to **integrate India's rich maritime history into its economic growth strategy.**

Conclusion

Lighthouse tourism exemplifies the harmonious blend of **heritage conservation** and **modern tourism development**, transforming these iconic maritime landmarks into thriving tourist destinations. By preserving India's rich maritime history while unlocking new economic opportunities, this initiative fosters both **community empowerment** and **sustainable growth**.

Under the **Sagarmala Programme**, with active participation from private stakeholders, lighthouse tourism is set to become a cornerstone of India's booming travel industry. These revitalized sites offer visitors a unique experience that combines **history, adventure, and the breathtaking beauty** of India's coastline. Over 9 lakh tourists visited lighthouses in the first half of the current fiscal, and it is evident, that the growing trend of lighthouses as tourists hotspots to continue.

As hubs of cultural and historical significance, lighthouses also serve as platforms for showcasing **local crafts, cuisine, and traditions**, further enriching the visitor experience. With continued efforts and innovation, lighthouse tourism not only preserves the past but also illuminates a bright future for India's coastal regions.

References

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