



**BACKGROUNDS**  
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Government of India

## The Indian Ports Act, 2025 *India's Bold Maritime Legislation*

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### Key Takeaways

- The Indian Ports Act, 2025 **replaces outdated provisions** of the Indian Ports Act, 1908, with **modern & contemporary regulations**.
- The Act establishes **Maritime State Development Council (MSDC)** as a statutory consultative body to **coordinate** between Centre and coastal States.
- The legislation mandates **Global Green Norms**, Disaster Readiness for Indian Ports.
- It simplifies port procedures & digitalise operations to enhance **Ease of Doing Business (EODB)**.

### Unveiling the Indian Ports Act, 2025

Ports have long served as the silent engines of India's economic momentum. As India grows, the strategic relevance of its maritime infrastructure has never been greater. Beyond logistics, ports are catalysts for **industrial corridors, employment generation, and urban renewal**.

The **Indian Ports Act, 2025** passed by Parliament in **August, 2025** marks a transformative milestone in India's maritime governance - replacing the century-old **Indian Ports Act of 1908** with a forward-looking, integrated framework tailored to the demands of a modern economy. The legislation reflects the Government's vision to position ports not merely as transit

### The Indian Ports Act, 2025

-  Modern Framework
-  New Institutions
-  Transparent Governance
-  Safety & Environment
-  Growth & Connectivity



points, but as engines of growth, employment, and strategic connectivity. **By consolidating port laws and empowering States**, the act fosters **cooperative federalism** and **structured development** across coastal states. It aims to unlock the full potential of India's 7,500 km coastline, streamline port administration, and align domestic practices with global maritime standards. As India charts its course toward becoming a global maritime leader, the Indian Ports Act, 2025 stands as a foundational reform - anchoring **efficiency, sustainability, and inclusive progress** at the heart of port-led development.

### Why Ports Matter: The Vision Behind the Indian Ports Act, 2025

Ports play a vital role in India's development by **facilitating trade, supporting industrial growth, and enabling regional connectivity**. They serve as strategic gateways for **imports and exports**, contributing significantly to national logistics and supply chains. The Ports in the country handle around 95% of EXIM Cargo by volume and 70% by value. India hosts 12 major ports and 200+ non-major (minor) ports across its coastline. The major ports operate under the administrative purview of the Ministry of Shipping, while non-major ports fall under the jurisdiction of respective State



Maritime Boards or State Governments. All major ports are fully operational; among the non-major ports, around 65 handle cargo, while the remainder function as designated "Port Limits" primarily serving fishing vessels and small passengers ferries across creeks and inland waterways.

Over the past decade, India's maritime sector has undergone a remarkable transformation, emerging as a key driver of economic connectivity and logistics efficiency. Major ports have significantly scaled up their **handling capacity and operational performance** to match international standards. This momentum has strengthened domestic trade routes as well as

elevated India's global standing. The sector's evolution underscores the strategic importance of ports in shaping India's future as a maritime power.

In light of these developments, the recently enacted **Indian Ports Act, 2025** marks a pivotal reform by replacing colonial-era legislation with a modern framework that promotes integrated development, strengthens Centre-State coordination, aligning India's port governance with global best practices, and boosting India's strategic maritime capabilities.

## India's Maritime Surge

### A Decade of Transformation



**Cargo Growth:** Indian Ports handled 1,594 MMT, up from 972 MMT. (2013-14 to 2024-25).



**Port Capacity:** Expanded by 87%, enhancing operational efficiency and volume.



**Efficiency Gains:** Ship turnaround time halved to 48 hours, aligning with global standards.



**Coastal Shipping:** Volumes rose 118%, reflecting stronger domestic connectivity.



**Inland Waterways:** Cargo movement surged 7x, unlocking new logistics corridors.



**Global Recognition:** 9 Indian ports featured in the World Bank's Container Port Performance Index, signalling rising international competitiveness.



Source: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

### Sectoral Overhaul: What the Act Delivers

The Indian Ports Act, 2025 introduces a modern regulatory framework to enhance governance, transparency, and sustainability across India's port ecosystem. It empowers statutory bodies, streamlines dispute resolution, and strengthens tariff regulation and environmental safeguards to align with global maritime standards.

### Key Anchors of the Indian Ports Act, 2025

PORT OFFICERS

- The Act designates the conservator - appointed by the government - as the port officer, with authority over other officers. The conservator retains powers over vessel movement within port limits and fee recovery, and adds new responsibilities for disease control, damage assessment, and penalty adjudication.

### STATUTORY BODIES

- **State Maritime Boards:** The Act formally recognizes State Maritime Boards established by coastal states and empowers them to manage non-major ports. These Boards will oversee port planning, infrastructure development, licensing, tariff regulation, and enforcement of safety, security, and environmental compliances.
- **Maritime State Development Council:** The Act grants statutory status to the Maritime State Development Council. The Council will guide **data collection and dissemination and transparency** across ports, and advise the central government on national planning, legislative reforms, port efficiency, and connectivity.

### DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

- State governments must set up Dispute Resolution Committees (DRCs) to **resolve conflicts** among non-major ports, concessionaires, users, and service providers. Appeals go to the High Court, not civil courts. The Boards may also allow arbitration or other alternative dispute resolution methods. This will benefit the **speedy dispute resolution**.

### TARIFF REGULATION

- Tariffs at major ports will be determined either by the Board of the Major Port Authority or by the Board of Directors if the port operates as a registered company. For non-major ports, tariff-setting authority rests with the State Maritime Board or its designated concessionaire. Further, the Indian Port Act 2025 requires tariffs and charges to be **published electronically for transparency**.

### SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- The Act upholds penalties for safety violations like damaging buoys or mishandling combustibles on board. It strengthens environmental protections by aligning with **global conventions (MARPOL, Ballast Water Management)** and introducing **new mandates for pollution control and disaster readiness**. Central government will conduct audits to ensure compliance with waste handling and emergency response plans.

These measures will be transforming India's maritime sector by streamlining legal frameworks, promoting coordinated port development, and enhancing business efficiency. Institutional reforms will empower states and foster strategic planning through dedicated bodies like State Maritime Boards and the Maritime State Development Council. **Digitalisation** plays a key role in improving port operations, with initiatives like the **Maritime Single Window** and **Advanced Vessel Traffic Systems** helping to boost efficiency, ease congestion, and lower operational costs.

The Transformative Impact of the Indian Port Act, 2025

The Indian Ports Act, 2025 emerges as a timely and transformative step toward modernizing and unifying port laws, boost development, and make business easier. It sets up strong governance bodies at the state and national levels, ensures safety and sustainability at ports, and aligns India with global standards. It also introduces systems to resolve disputes efficiently.

Consolidation & Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unifies and updates laws related to ports across India.</li><li>Promotes integrated and strategic development of ports nationwide.</li><li>Enhances ease of doing business in the maritime sector.</li><li>Ensures optimal use of India’s extensive coastline.</li></ul>
Institutional Strengthening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establishes and empowers <b>State Maritime Boards</b> to manage non-major ports effectively.</li><li>Sets up the <b>Maritime State Development Council</b> to guide structured growth and coordination across states.</li></ul>
Safety, Sustainability & Compliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides frameworks for managing:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pollution control</li><li>Disaster response and emergency preparedness</li><li>Port security and safety</li><li>Navigation systems and port-related data</li></ul></li><li>Ensures India meets its commitments under relevant <b>international maritime agreements</b>.</li></ul>
Environmental Conservation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Introduces measures to protect and conserve port ecosystems and infrastructure.</li></ul>
Dispute Resolution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creates adjudicatory mechanisms for resolving port-related disputes efficiently and transparently.</li></ul>

Conclusion

The passage of the Indian Ports Act, 2025 marks a defining moment in India’s maritime journey—ushering in a future-ready framework that replaces colonial-era legislation with a modern, transparent, and growth-oriented approach. The Act reflects a strategic shift toward integrated port development, cooperative federalism, and global competitiveness. It strengthens institutional capacity, streamlines governance, and embeds sustainability at the heart of maritime operations.



As India charts its course toward *Viksit Bharat* by 2047, this legislation stands as a cornerstone reform - **empowering coastal states, attracting investment, and enhancing trade efficiency**. More than a legal update, it is a blueprint for transforming ports into engines of national progress, regional connectivity, and inclusive development. With its emphasis on digitalisation, environmental stewardship, and structured planning, the Indian Ports Act positions India's maritime sector to lead not only in cargo volumes but in innovation, resilience, and global leadership.

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