



General Studies-3; Topic: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

India's Port Development

Introduction

- India has moved up to 22nd rank in the global rankings on the "International Shipments" category.
- The reason behind this performance is the **reduction in the dwell time (the amount of time vessels spend in port actively loading or unloading cargo)**.
- India has also done well in port operational efficiency.
- This achievement is due to **large investments in the upgradation of infrastructure in the ports and shipping sector**.

Recent Developments

- There has been a consistent focus on improvements in port efficiency and productivity through
 - reforms,
 - induction of new technologies,
 - a greater thrust on public-private partnership and
 - overall commitment to the ease of doing business.
- **The total capacity of Indian ports has gone up from about 1,560 MMT in 2015 to more than 2,600 MMT.**
- The efficiency of ports has received a boost with the launch of the **National Logistics Portal (Marine)**, a single-window digital platform for all stakeholders.
- The **Sagar Setu app** facilitates seamless movement of goods and services in ports while substantially enhancing the ease of doing business.
- India and Indonesia have completed a joint feasibility study on developing the strategically valuable Sabang port.

Focus on decarbonisation

- There has been a 14-fold increase in the use of renewable energy in major ports over the last eight years.
- Four of the major ports generate more renewable energy than their total energy needs.
- The **Harit Sagar Green Port guidelines** aims to bring a paradigm shift towards safe, efficient and sustainable ports.

Policy and legislative reforms

- The Centre has also undertaken several key policy and legislative reforms to boost the port sector.
- Major Port Authorities Act, 2021 grants greater autonomy to major ports.
- The Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021 provides for increased safety and efficiency in vessel traffic services.
- The Indian Vessels Act, 2021 brings uniformity in law and standardised provisions across all inland waterways in the country.
- The government has endeavoured to develop ports as hubs of economic activity.
- Sagarmala Programme to modernise our ports.

Way Forward

- Overall **capacity augmentation** of Indian ports should be done.
- Major ports should consider suitable **reduction in vessel related charges** and make them at par with the charges prevailing in neighbouring foreign ports.
- The ministry of ports, shipping and waterways should expeditiously **resolve issues like clearances related to land acquisition, CRZ clearances** etc, so that the execution of Sagarmala projects is expedited.

Conclusion

- The operational efficiencies of Indian ports and the Indian maritime sector is an important step in India's endeavour to become a global maritime power as envisaged in the **Maritime India Vision, 2030**.