



Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates 3rd Global IALA Council Session in Mumbai, Unveils Digital Portal for Lighthouse Tourism

Over 30 countries participate in high-level global deliberations on marine navigation safety and emerging technologies

Discussions to focus on aids to navigation, e-Navigation, VTS and maritime digitalisation from December 8–12

“India Is Emerging as a Global Maritime Innovator Under PM Modi’s Leadership:” Sarbananda Sonowal at IALA Council Session

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 09 DEC 2025 5:26PM by PIB Delhi

The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Sarbananda Sonowal virtually inaugurated the 3rd Session of the Council of the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) held in Mumbai today. The Union Minister also launched the Digital Ticketing Portal for Lighthouse Tourism, marking a major step toward digital visitor services for improved access to lighthouse destinations across India.

The prestigious global event, being held from December 8–12, is organised by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) and brings together 42 IALA Council members, three AIMG members, 11 observers, IALA Secretariat delegates and representatives from more than 30 countries.

Speaking at the inaugural session, the Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said hosting the council in Mumbai reflects India’s rising role in shaping the future of global maritime standards. Sarbananda Sonowal referenced India’s maritime legacy dating back to the Harappan era and highlighted India’s development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, including the dedicated Lighthouse Museum that celebrates India’s maritime past and future.

The Union Minister underscored the growing relevance of global cooperation as technology reshapes maritime navigation, including autonomous shipping, satellite-enabled systems and digital vessel management. Sonowal noted the importance of IALA’s leadership in harmonising navigation standards worldwide and reaffirmed India’s partnership in the pursuit of safe, efficient and sustainable maritime navigation.

Speaking at the event, Sarbananda Sonowal said, “Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, India’s maritime sector is undergoing a transformational shift — from infrastructure expansion and digital innovation to green and sustainable shipping. PM Modi ji’s strategic focus has positioned India not only as a key maritime nation but as a trusted contributor to global standards, safety and cooperation.”

During the event, Sarbananda Sonowal launched the Digital Ticketing Portal for Lighthouse Tourism, supporting digital access, transparency and convenience for visitors across 75 lighthouse destinations. The minister noted that all lighthouses in India are now solar powered and tourism at these sites has grown significantly over the past decade.

Sarbananda Sonowal told the gathering, “It is a matter of great pride for India to host the 3rd IALA Council Session in Mumbai. As technologies such as autonomous shipping, satellite-based navigation systems and digitalisation rapidly evolve, the role of IALA in global harmonisation of navigation standards becomes even more critical. India stands firmly with IALA in pursuit of safe, efficient and sustainable navigation.”

Highlighting major national initiatives, Sonowal cited reforms under Maritime India Vision 2030 and the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, which focus on strengthening port infrastructure, advancing shipbuilding capability, improving logistics efficiency, promoting green shipping and accelerating digital transformation. The Union Minister said these initiatives represent India’s long-term maritime strategy under the leadership of the prime minister.

The Union Minister added that aids to navigation remain central to maritime safety, and India continues to invest in modern AtoN systems, digital navigation solutions and capacity-building for developing maritime nations.

“Our dynamic Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji has redefined India’s maritime trajectory with bold reforms and a future-facing roadmap for Amrit Kaal. Whether it is digital ticketing for lighthouse tourism, modern navigation systems or green shipping initiatives, every milestone reflects his commitment to making India a leader in safe, smart and sustainable maritime operations,” added the Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

India serves as an active IALA Council member, contributing to technical cooperation, training and global standard-setting, while collaborating with international partners to enhance safe navigation practices.

Hosting the 3rd IALA Council Session in Mumbai underscores India’s commitment to strengthening global maritime cooperation and advancing international standards in navigation, safety and sustainability.





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(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2200943) आगंतुक पटल : 630
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