Sagarmala: Transforming India's Maritime Landscape

Posted On: 11 APR 2026 10:46AM by PIB Delhi

Key Takeaways

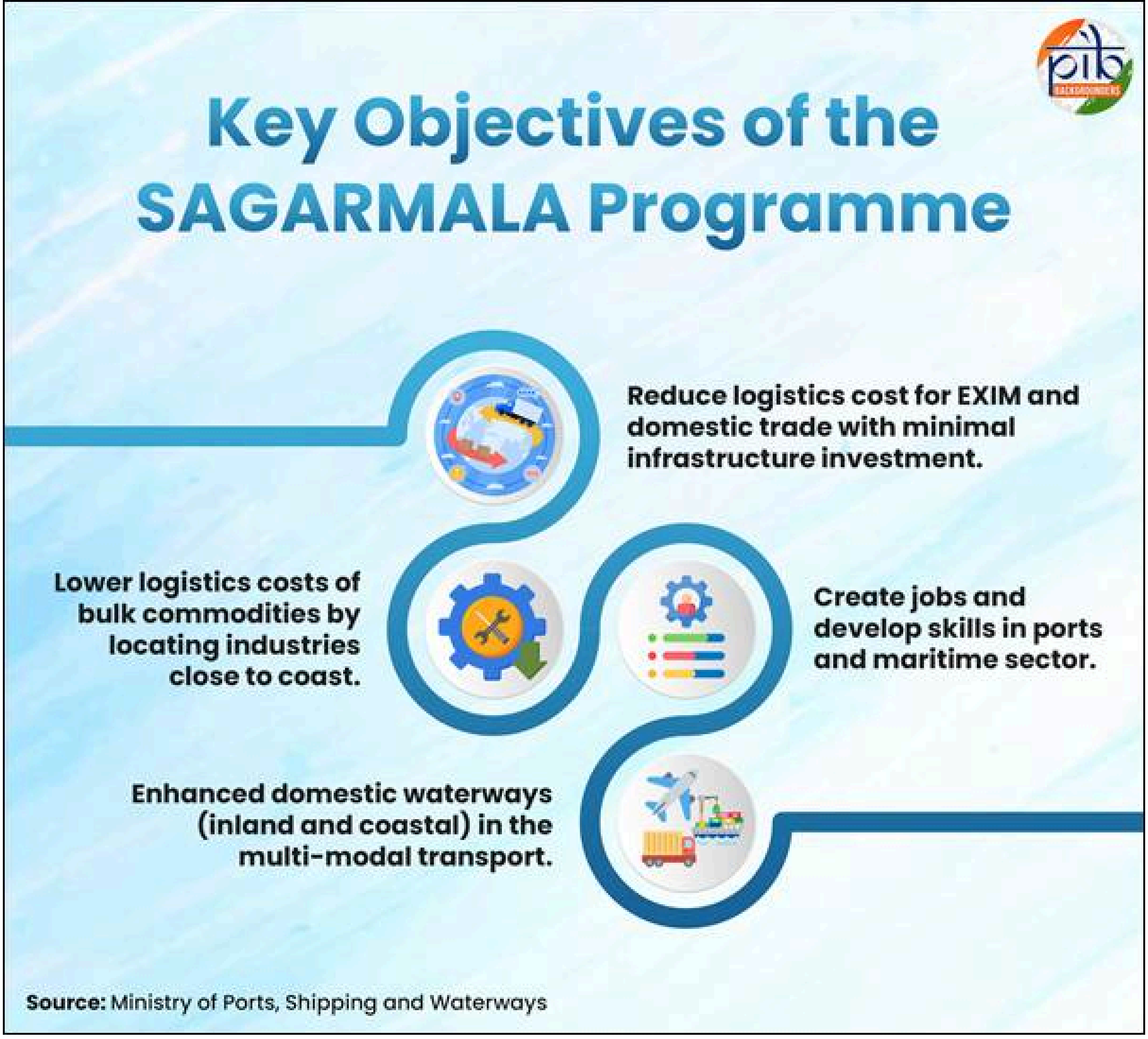
- Sagarmala is implementing **845 projects worth ₹6.06 lakh crore,** with **315 projects worth ₹1.57 lakh crore completed.**
- **The completion of 7 coastal berth projects** has added **9.84 million tonnes per annum of cargo handling capacity.**
- India's major ports handled a record **915 million tonnes of cargo in FY 2025–26.**
- **Sagarmala 2.0**, supported with **₹85,482 crore**, aims to catalyze **₹3.6 lakh crore in investment.**

Introduction

India's maritime sector plays a central role in shaping its trade and economic activity. The country has a **coastline of about 11,099 kilometres**, along with nearly **14,500 kilometres of potentially navigable waterways**. Coastal regions are home to major ports that connect India with global shipping routes and facilitate the movement of goods and passengers. Around **95% of the country's trade by volume and about 70% by value is handled through maritime routes.**

India has **12 major ports** and **over 200 non-major ports**. While the major ports are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the non-major ports are under the jurisdiction of the respective State Maritime Boards/ State Government. These ports handle a wide range of cargo, including crude oil, coal, containers, fertilizers, and agricultural commodities, making ports and shipping central to the country's trade logistics.

Building on this, the **Sagarmala Programme** was launched in **March, 2015** to **promote port-led development**. It aims to improve logistics efficiency, reduce transportation costs, and support trade by increasing the use of coastal shipping and inland waterways alongside existing road and rail networks. It focuses on modernizing and building ports, improving port connectivity while encouraging investment from both the public and private sectors.



Components of the Sagarmala Programme

The Sagarmala programme consists of several key components aimed at transforming India's maritime sector. The overall set of projects under the Sagarmala Programme are divided into **5 pillars and 24 categories** as given below.

Port Modernization and New Port Development

This pillar focuses on upgrading existing ports and developing new ones to expand capacity and improve operational efficiency. It includes addressing infrastructure gaps and introducing modernization, mechanization, and digital systems in port operations.

Port Connectivity Enhancement

This component aims to strengthen connectivity between ports and the hinterland to facilitate faster and more cost-efficient cargo movement. It includes the development of multimodal transport networks, integrating road, rail, coastal shipping and inland waterways for seamless logistics.

Port-Led Industrialization

The programme promotes the development of industrial clusters in port-proximate areas to support manufacturing and economic activity. Proximity to ports helps reduce logistics costs and improves access to domestic and international markets.

Coastal Community Development

This pillar focuses on improving livelihoods and promoting sustainable development in coastal regions. It includes skill development programs, support for fisheries and coastal tourism, and initiatives aimed at enhancing economic opportunities for coastal communities.

Coastal Shipping and Inland Waterways Transport

This component encourages greater use of coastal shipping and inland waterways for cargo movement. These modes offer cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternatives to road and rail transport while helping reduce congestion on existing transport networks.

Navigating Success: Achievements and Milestones

Over the past eleven years, the Sagarmala Programme has delivered measurable outcomes. The cumulative progress highlights its scale and long-term impact on maritime infrastructure development. Around **845 projects**, estimated at **₹6.06 lakh crore**, have been taken up under the programme. As of 24th March 2026, **315 projects worth ₹1.57 lakh crore** have been completed, while **210 projects** are currently under implementation, and **320 projects** are in the planning stage.

The following initiatives reflect sustained progress in strengthening port infrastructure, improving connectivity, and supporting economic activity across coastal regions.

Infrastructure and Capacity Creation

Significant progress has been achieved in strengthening coastal infrastructure and expanding cargo-handling capacity through targeted investments.

- **Fishing Harbour Development:** A total of **11 fishing harbour projects,** costing **₹1,057 crore**, have been completed, directly benefiting more than **30,000 fishermen**. In Karnataka, the third-stage expansion and modernization of the **fishing harbour at Malpe** have been completed, with the development of the **fishing harbour at Kulai** under implementation.
- **Coastal Berth Development: 7 coastal berth projects**, valued at **₹494 crore**, have been completed, adding **9.84 million tonnes per annum (MTPA)** of cargo-handling capacity.
- The **renovation of the historic Bascule Bridge at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata**, is being undertaken to preserve the port's heritage while upgrading critical infrastructure. Once completed, the modernized bridge is expected to enable safer, faster, and more efficient movement of cargo and vehicles within the port premises, thereby enhancing logistics efficiency at one of India's oldest and busiest ports.
- A project for the **augmentation of firefighting facilities at Pir Pau Terminal** of Mumbai Port is under implementation, with a cost of ₹52.69 crore, focusing on strengthening safety infrastructure at the port.

Improved Port Performance and Global Standing

The transformation under the programme is underscored by improved operational performance and stronger global competitiveness of Indian ports.

- **Record Cargo Handling:** India's **major ports** have collectively handled a record **915.17 million tonnes (MT)** of cargo during FY 2025–26, surpassing the annual target of 904 MT. This marks a **year-on-year growth of 7.06%** demonstrating sustained growth in maritime trade.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Average vessel turnaround time declined significantly from **96 hours in 2014** to **49.5 hours in 2025,** indicating improved port efficiency and faster cargo handling.
- **Global Recognition:** Indian ports have strengthened their global presence, with **9 ports ranking among the world's top 100**, including **Visakhapatnam Port**, which **ranks among the top 20 ports for container traffic**.
- **Growth in Inland Waterways:** Cargo movement through inland waterways increased from **18.10 MTPA** in FY 2013–14 to **145.50 MTPA in FY 2024-25**, representing a growth of about **700%**, contributing to a more efficient and diversified logistics system.

Passenger Connectivity and Urban Waterway Transport

The programme has also supported the expansion of passenger and vehicle movement through coastal and inland waterways, improving connectivity and reducing travel time.

- **Ro-Pax and Ferry Services:** A total of **29 Ro-Pax** (a ship that carries both vehicles and passengers) **and passenger ferry projects**, with an investment of **₹1,233 crore**, have been taken up to strengthen urban waterway transport systems. Out of these, **17 projects worth ₹706 crore** have been completed, benefiting more than **35 lakh passengers** by providing faster and more efficient transport options.
- **Improved Travel Efficiency:** The **Ghogha–Hazira Ro-Pax service** reduced travel time from nearly **10 hours by road to about 4 hours by sea**, enabling the movement of over **36,000 trucks**, **61,000 cars**, and nearly **4 lakh passengers**. The **Mumbai–Mandwa ferry service** has eased road congestion by replacing a **109-kilometre road journey** with an **18.5-kilometre sea route**, substantially reducing travel time.

Coastal Livelihoods and Skill Development

Beyond infrastructure, the programme has contributed to improving livelihoods in coastal communities through targeted skill development initiatives.

- Under the **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) convergence initiative**, more than **7,600 candidates** have received skill training, with over **3,100 individuals** successfully placed in maritime and allied sectors.

The Sagarmala Programme has estimated a cumulative employment potential of around **1 crore jobs, including 40 lakh direct and 60 lakh indirect employment opportunities**, driven by port-led industrialization and the expansion of maritime and related infrastructure.

The Institutional Backbone of Sagarmala

The Sagarmala Programme is supported by a multi-tier framework designed to enable coordinated planning, efficient implementation, and continuous monitoring across the Centre and States. The key components of this framework are as follows:

- **National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC):**

  Constituted in May 2015, NSAC is the apex body providing overall policy guidance and oversight for the programme. It reviews key aspects of planning and implementation and ensures alignment of projects with the broader objectives.

- **Maritime States Development Council (MSDC):**

  The MSDC is convened periodically to facilitate centre–state coordination. It brings together central ministries, state governments, and maritime stakeholders to review progress, address inter-ministerial issues, and promote coordinated development of ports and related infrastructure.

- **State Sagarmala Committees (SSCs):**

  Constituted in coastal states and union territories (UTs), SSCs are responsible for identifying projects, coordinating implementation, and monitoring progress at the state level. They play a key role in aligning state-level priorities with the overall objectives of the programme.

- **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL):**

  Sagarmala Development Company Limited (SDCL), established in **August 2016,** has played an important role in advancing India's maritime infrastructure. In June **2025**, SDCL underwent a significant transformation and was restructured as the **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL).** This transition reflects an expanded mandate, with SMFCL positioned as India's first **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** focused on the maritime sector. SMFCL aims to provide financial solutions tailored to the needs of the maritime sector, addressing critical financing gaps and supporting the development of ports, shipping infrastructure and related industries. The company approved loan sanctions of about ₹4,300 crore in December 2025, formally entering the maritime lending space, reinforcing its ambition to emerge as a dedicated and credible financier for the maritime sector.

The Next Wave of Innovation

Sagarmala 2.0

Sagarmala 2.0 is proposed as the next phase of the Sagarmala Programme launched in March 2015, building upon its achievements while adopting a broader and more integrated national vision for the maritime sector outlined in MIV (Maritime India Vision) 2030 and MAKV (Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision) 2047. The scheme aims to position India as a global maritime hub through comprehensive modernization of ports, promotion of port-led industrialization, improvement in coastal and hinterland connectivity to ports, enhancement of inland waterways & coastal shipping services, development of island and coastal communities, and fostering innovation aligned with sustainable development objectives. Sagarmala 2.0 is also envisioned as a key enabler of inclusive economic growth, employment generation, and logistics cost reduction, in alignment with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. The proposed scheme envisages total budgetary support of ₹**85,482 crore** with **total investment of ₹3.6 lakh crore**, to be utilized for identified interventions across ports, inland waterways & coastal infrastructure, maritime services, coastal development, research & development and institutional strengthening during the scheme period.

Conclusion

India's maritime sector has seen significant expansion in capacity, connectivity, and operational efficiency over the past decade. The Sagarmala Programme has contributed to the modernization of ports, the development of coastal and inland waterway infrastructure, and the enhancement of cargo handling capabilities. Completed projects have added measurable capacity, reduced vessel turnaround times, and supported port-led industrial and coastal community development. Collectively, the initiatives provide a structured approach to sustaining growth and strengthening India's maritime infrastructure for trade and industrial activities.

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