Sarbananda Sonowal Outlines Plan to Double Coastal & Waterway Freight Share to 12% by 2047

Paradip Port, Govt of Odisha team up to Develop Puri International Cruise Terminal with Rs 1,500 crore: Sarbananda Sonowal

Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme and Cruise Bharat Mission expected to create more than 560,000 jobs and save 16 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions

India's maritime sector is undergoing massive transformations: Sonowal at Consultative Committee meeting in Puri

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Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Sarbananda Sonowal, said at a Consultative Committee meeting in Puri, Odisha, that the government is working to double the share of coastal and inland waterway shipping in India's freight movement from 6% to 12% by 2047, and to attract 1 million sea cruise passengers by 2029, through two proposed initiatives: the Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme and the Cruise Bharat Mission.

The Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal also announced that Puri International Cruise Terminal will be developed by Paradip Port Authority (PPA) in partnership with the Government of Odisha. The project is likely to be developed at a cost of Rs 1,500 crores.

Sonowal chaired a meeting of the ministry's Consultative Committee on strengthening coastal and cruise shipping. **Minister of State of MoPSW Shantanu Thakur** and eight members of Parliament attended. The ministry's secretary introduced the topic by outlining measures to promote coastal and cruise shipping.

"In the last 12 years under PM Narendra Modi, India's maritime sector has undergone massive transformations," **Sonowal** said.

India has more than 11,000 kilometers (6,800 miles) of coastline, a natural advantage for moving freight over long distances more cleanly. Coastal cargo at Indian ports has surged from 74 million metric tons to 177 million metric tons over the past 12 years, growth of about 140%, Sonowal said.

“Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s dynamic leadership, our coastline and our rivers are being turned into engines of growth. The Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme and the Cruise Bharat Mission will move more cargo by sea and bring more visitors to our shores, creating jobs and protecting the environment,” **Sarbananda Sonowal** said.

The Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme, announced in the 2026-27 budget, will offer incentives to cargo owners, coastal vessel operators and multimodal transport operators, who move cargo by more than one means of transport, such as ship, rail and road.

Sea cruises are also growing fast, Sonowal said. In the 2025-26 fiscal year, India recorded 462,661 ocean cruise passengers and 212 vessel calls, a 5.5-fold rise in passenger traffic and a 2.1-fold rise in vessel calls since 2013-14. The Cruise Bharat Mission, launched in September 2024, targets 1 million sea cruise passengers and 400,000 jobs by March 2029.

Twenty river cruise circuits across 16 National Waterways are already operating, and 51 more have been identified for development in phases. Sonowal said 143 river cruise terminals and landing points are operational. The two initiatives together are expected to generate more than 560,000 jobs and save 16 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, Sonowal said.

Sonowal highlighted the development of National Waterway No. 5 in Odisha, estimated to cost more than Rs 13,000 crore. The waterway is meant to link the state's industrial and mining centers, including Talcher and Kalinganagar, with ports on the east coast.

Members of Parliament praised the government's efforts to develop the maritime sector and offered suggestions on maritime infrastructure in different parts of the country.

"I extend my deep gratitude to the MPs for their valuable insights and suggestions, which will help shape this journey," **Sonowal** said. "Led by PM Modi's vision, we are steadily advancing towards a competitive, sustainable and thriving maritime ecosystem for a Viksit Bharat.”









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