

3-Day Chintan Baithak of Ministry of Ports Concluded

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[GS Paper 2 - Govt. Policies and Interventions]

Context - A three-day Chintan Baithak of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways concluded with some of the remarkable decisions.

The Baithak was organized with an aim to discuss and deliberate ideas and innovations that can propel India's blue economy. It was chaired by Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

Key Highlights

- Mr. Sonowal reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to develop and promote India's blue economy. He further suggested that all ports should prepare a master plan in order to become Mega Ports by 2047.
- He also emphasized that it is imperative that utmost care is taken to optimally utilize the huge opportunity of the Indian marine economy to make an Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

- A total of 157 road connectivity projects and 137 rail connectivity projects are being undertaken for promoting multimodal connectivity at Ports.
- Various sessions included new Initiatives like Coastal routes were identified for urban transportation covering the entire coastline of India. Efficient utilization of core and non-core assets of Major Ports were deliberated.
- Various technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, BigData, GeoFencing, Data driven traffic management in the ports, IOT based truck platooning, GIS based cargo tracking etc. were discussed to simplify and smoothen the operations of Major Ports to convert ports in 'Smart Ports' and further 'Intelligent Ports' as envisioned in Maritime India Vision-2030.
- The Union Minister exhorted all the port authorities to identify, initiate and complete one important project for modernisation and mechanization. This will augment port capacity and improve functional efficiency.
- Possibilities of restructuring the Indian Ports Association, Creating India's first ever Maritime Arbitration Center to resolve maritime disputes in India itself instead of going to other countries were explored. Probabilities of establishing satellite Ports for reducing the congestion and burden on Major Ports and attracting more cargo were also discussed.
- These completed projects would showcase the efforts taken by the Major Ports to complement the impetus provided towards infrastructure development and its multiplier effects by boosting the capital expenditure by Rs. 7.5. Lakh crore the current fiscal – an increase of 35.4 per cent over the previous year.