
Indian Port Bill,2025

Introduction

The Indian Port Bill,2025 was introduced in the Lok Sabha at 28th march, 2025. It subsequently, got passed by the Lok Sabha on Aug 12,2025 and Rajya Sabha on Aug 18,2025. It received the assent of the President on the 21st August, 2025 and got enacted as The Indian Ports Act, 2025.¹

The needs for such as legislation arose as the coastline is the backbone of India's 4 trillion economy, with the countries port capacity being expanded by 87% and surge in cargo handling to a historic high of 855 million tonnes. Thus, the requirement of a new Act to replace the colonial Indian Ports Act, 1908 became pertinent.² The new Act provides for regulating port operations and management, levy of fees and tariffs, and environmental safeguards.

The biggest change brought by the Act was the introduction of a new authority called the Maritime State Development Council and State Maritime Boards. The council will govern issues regarding tariff transparency and port data collection and submission. Meanwhile, The Boards will administer non-major ports.

Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC)

Under the Section 16 of the new Act, the state government shall set up a Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) which will adjudicate on disputes between non-major ports, concessionaires, port users, and service providers within the state. The committee must pass an order within 6 months from the data of the application. Appeals against the order of such as committee will be under the High court of the respective jurisdiction.

Further, the Bill requires compliance with global maritime conventions (MARPOL and Ballast Water). It also requires ports to prepare pollution control and disaster management plans which will be audited periodically by the central government.³

Maritime State development Council

¹ Indian Ports Act, 2025 (Act No 27 of 2025) (India)

<https://shipmin.gov.in/sites/default/files/FINAL%20ACT%2027%20of%202015%20-%20indian%20Ports%20Act%2C%202025-2.pdf> accessed 9 January 2026.

² Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, 'Lok Sabha Passes Indian Ports Bill, 2025 to Boost Coastal Development' (News On Air, 12 August 2025) <https://www.newsonair.gov.in/lok-sabha-passes-indian-ports-bill-2025-to-boost-coastal-development/> accessed 9 January 2026.

³ PRS Legislative Research, 'Legislative Brief: The Indian Ports Bill, 2025' (2025) <https://prsindia.org/billtrack/prs-products/prs-legislative-brief-1753419839> accessed 9 January 2026

Sub section (2) of Section 3 provides for the composition of member under the council. It will be chaired by the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways. Members include ministers-in-charge of ports of each state, secretaries in Indian Navy, Coast Guard dealing with coastal security, and secretary of the Union Ministry for Ports, Shipping and Waterways. Section 6 provides for the function of the council. Its powers include issuing guidelines on matters such as data collection along with method of collection, dissemination of the same and ensuring transparency in matters concerning port tariffs. The tariff for a major port will be fixed by the: (i) Board of Major Port Authority, or (ii) Board of Directors of a port registered as a company.⁴ They will also advise the government on the formulation of a national perspective plan and make recommendations on legislative adequacy, efficiency of ports and connectivity to ports. The national Perspective plan as made by the central government has to be adhered to by the central government, state governments, Boards of Major Port Authorities, and State Maritime Board.

State maritime board

The state maritime board are established under the powers conferred under section 13(i) of the said Act. Such recognized Boards are listed under schedule 3 of the said Act. Presently, the Act has recognized 8 such boards, further a provision has been created, allowing for recognition of any additional such boards for 6 months as the state governments deem fit. Section 15 of the Act provides for the functions of such a Board. These include exercising licensing functions for port infrastructure, supervision of all port works, fixing port tariff, and regulation of navigation within port limits. The Board or a concessionaire authorised by it will fix the tariff.⁵

Pollution

Chapter VIII of the Act deals with Prevention, Containment of Pollution and Response. Further, Section 44 deals with measure for prevention or containment of pollution. All ports must prepare a port waste reception and handling plan as prescribed by the central government, in consultation with the state government. The master of a vessel must ensure that the generated waste is delivered at such a reception facility. Beyond that, in case of any incident that involves a threat of pollution to coastal waters, must be reported to the central or state governments, as prescribed by the central government.

⁴ PRS Legislative Research, 'Bill Summary: The Indian Ports Bill, 2025' (2025) <https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-indian-ports-bill-2025> accessed 9 January 2026

⁵ Ibid 4

Punishment for offences

Section 53 (2) of the Act enables for punishment for any act in contravention of the rules laid down herewith. Further, the 1st and 2nd schedule of the act provides an in detail break down of the offence, the relevant section referred to for the same and the punishment for violation.

Port Officers

Section 18 of the new Act allows for appointment of a conservator by the Government. All port workers including the harbour master and the health officer will be subordinate to the conservator. The subsequent section provides powers such as issue directions to any vessel regarding anchoring, berthing, movement within port limits, obstruction removal, and recovery of fees and charges to the conservator. Besides these earlier powers which were also found in the colonial Act, the new Act provides certain new function to the conservators such as issuing directions to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, assessing damage to port property, and adjudicating penalties.

Port officers such as conservators and health officers are granted power of entry and inspection. However, the Bill lacks safeguards against the abuse of such power. Further, there is no provisions for appeal against the penalty levied by such conservator.⁶

Conclusion

During discussion in the Rajya Sabha, Shri Sonowal said, “*Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji’s foresight has enabled us to unlock the true potential of our maritime sector, driving India closer to the goal of becoming a top global maritime nation as we march toward a Viksit Bharat by 2047.*”⁷ Further, he added that the Bill was not just about efficiency but about federal partnership, ensuring States and the Centre work in tandem on port-led growth.

Officials say the new law will enhance trade competitiveness, attract private investment, create jobs and embed sustainability in India’s shipping and port operations. The new act if implemented with vision and accountability can redefine Indian maritime future, but such action will require agency cooperation, digitalisation, and political will.⁸

⁶ Ibid 3

⁷ Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, ‘Rajya Sabha Passes Indian Ports Bill, 2025, Replaces Colonial-era Law’ (PIB Delhi, 18 August 2025) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2157621> accessed 12 January 2026

⁸ Poshika Mukku, ‘Indian Ports Bill 2025: Charting a New Course for India’s Maritime Power’ (The Geostrata, 20 August 2025) <https://www.thegeostrata.com/post/indian-ports-bill-2025-charting-a-new-course-for-india-s-maritime-power> accessed 12 January 2026