

Aids to Navigation Bill, 2020

July 11, 2020

To replace an over nine decades old law governing lighthouses, the shipping ministry has issued a draft Aids to Navigation Bill, 2020 seeking suggestions from stakeholders and general public.

Aids to Navigation Bill

The draft bill is proposed to **replace the almost nine decades old Lighthouse Act, 1927**, to **incorporate the global best practices, technological developments and India's international obligations in the field of Aids to Marine Navigation**. This initiative is part of the proactive approach adopted by the Ministry of Shipping by repealing archaic colonial laws and replacing it with modern and contemporary needs of the maritime industry.

It aims to provide for:

- Development, maintenance and management of aids to navigation in India
- Training and certification of operator of aids to navigation
- Development of historical, educational and cultural value of aids to navigation
- Ensure compliance with the country's obligation under the maritime treaties and International Instruments to which India is a party.

The draft bill provides for **empowering Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) with additional power and functions** such as vessel traffic service, wreck flagging, training and certification, implementation of other obligations under International Conventions, where India is a signatory. It also provides for **identification and development of heritage lighthouses**.

The draft bill comprises a **new schedule of offences**, along with commensurate penalties for obstructing and damaging the aids to navigation, and non-compliance with directives issued by the Central Government and other bodies under the draft bill. With the advent of modern technologically improved aids to maritime navigation, the role of authorities regulating and operating maritime navigation has changed drastically. Therefore the new law encompasses a **major shift from lighthouses to modern aids of navigation.**