

Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021

July 29, 2021

In news – Recently, Parliament passed Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021. It seeks to provide a **framework for the development, maintenance, and management of aids to navigation in India**. It **repeals the Lighthouse Act, 1927**, which provides for the maintenance and control of lighthouses in India.

Key provisions of the bill-

- Once enacted, it will **apply to the whole of India** including various maritime zones including territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone.
- **The Bill defines aid to navigation as a device, system, or service**, external to the vessels designed and operated to enhance the safety and efficiency of navigation of vessels and vessel traffic.
- **A vessel includes** a ship, boat, sailing vessel, fishing vessel, submersible, and mobile offshore drilling units.
- **Vessel traffic service is defined** as a service to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and protect the environment.
- It provides that the **central government will appoint a Director General, Deputy Director Generals, and Directors for districts**.
- **The Central Advisory Committee (CAC)**, appointed by the central government, consists of persons representing the interests affected by the Bill, or having special knowledge of the sector.
- **The central government is responsible for the development, maintenance, and management of all general aids to navigation** and vessel traffic services.

- **Powers of the central government for management of vessel traffic services include:**

Authorising vessel traffic service provider to operate such service within an authorised area

Accrediting and approving vessel traffic service training and certification, and

Adding to, altering, or requiring any person to add to or alter any aspect of a vessel traffic service.

- The bill provides that no person shall be allowed to operate on any aid to navigation (including any ancillary activities), or any vessel traffic service in any place unless he holds a valid training certificate.
- The central government will accredit training organisations for imparting training to, or conduct assessments of, persons in the operation of aids to navigation and vessel traffic services.
- **The new law provides that marine aids to navigation dues will be levied and collected for every ship arriving at or departing from any port in India**, at the rate specified by the central government from time to time.
- Any **dispute related to the marine aids to navigation dues, expenses, or costs**, will be heard and determined by a **civil court having jurisdiction at the place** where the dispute arose.
- Intentionally causing obstruction of, reduction in, or limitation of, the effectiveness of any aid to navigation or vessel traffic service, will be punishable with imprisonment of up to six months, or a fine up to one lakh rupees, or both
- Intentionally causing damage to, or destruction of any aid to navigation or vessel traffic services, will be punishable with imprisonment of up to one year, or a fine up to five lakh rupees, or both.