

Maritime Cluster

Recently, while launching the Ghogha-Hazira ferry, the PM spoke about an upcoming maritime cluster at GIFT CITY in Gujarat. This concept of maritime cluster is totally new to India. In fact, these clusters have been driving some of the most competitive ports of the world like Rotterdam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Oslo, Shanghai, and London.

In this [DNS](#), we will talk about what is maritime cluster and also know its importance for India.

The project of maritime cluster was conceptualized back in 2007. The approval was given to this project in 2015 after a period of 8 years. A high level committee was also setup to pilot this project.

Basically, maritime cluster is a collection of firms, institutions, and businesses in the maritime sector that are geographically located close to each other.

The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), a nodal agency of the Gujarat government, has been trying to develop such a cluster at GIFT City in Gandhinagar through its subsidiary Gujarat Ports Infrastructure and Development Company Ltd (GPIDCL).

This cluster in its first stage will consist of Gujarat-based shipping lines, freight forwarders, shipping agents, bunker suppliers, stevedores, and ship brokers with chartering requirements.

In the second stage, the cluster would attempt to bring Indian ship owners, ship operators, Indian charterers and technical consultants spread in cities like Mumbai, Chennai, and Delhi to Gujarat. Thereafter it would target to attract global players in the maritime sphere.

What is the need for Maritime cluster?

The projects aims to bring back businesses that have migrated over the years to various foreign locations.

Gujarat has a lot of ports and handles 40 per cent of the country's cargo, but the entire value-chain has not been targeted yet. Moreover, due to the lack of right ecosystem in the country, a lot of Indian companies have shifted to foreign locations.

Large corporates like the Aditya Birla Group and Tata Group tap clusters in Dubai and Singapore for their maritime needs.

Apart from attracting maritime businesses, an Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) centre will be setup. This will be done under the aegis of Gujarat Maritime University, which will come up at the maritime cluster. A centre such as this does not currently exist in India.

This centre will function like the Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre (EMAC) at the Dubai Maritime Cluster, China Maritime Arbitration Commission in the Greater Bay Area in China, and the Singapore Centre for Maritime Arbitration in the Singapore Maritime Cluster, among others.

Along with this, the centre will also provide an option to Indian players seeking to avoid availing the services of international alternate dispute resolution hubs which entail huge costs, time, and travel.

Not only this, the cluster is also expected to house the office of Director General of Shipping. This office will look after the needs of shipping sector and also ship recycling.

The maritime cluster is expected to take up 8,000 square feet of space in GIFT City later this year.

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