

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2720
ANSWERED ON 11.08.2026

COASTAL SHIPPING AND CRUISE TOURISM

2720. SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR:

Will the Minister of PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether coastal shipping and cruise tourism are being promoted by Government;
- (b) the details thereof;
- (c) the cargo and passenger traffic handled thereunder; and
- (d) the future expansion plans of the Government?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF PORTS SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
(SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL)

(a) to (b) Yes Sir, Government is promoting coastal shipping and cruise tourism. The details of various measures taken by the Government is available at Annexure-1.

(c) The details of cargo traffic and cruise passenger traffic are as under:

Sl. No.	Traffic		2014-15	2025-26	% Growth
1.	Cargo (million metric tons)	Coastal	74	177	139
		Inland waterways	29	218	652
2.	No. of cruise passengers	Sea cruise	1.08 lakh	4.62 lakh	328
		Inland waterways cruise	-	10.5 crore	Exponential growth

(d) In Union Budget 2026, launch of a Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme was announced to increase the share of inland waterways and coastal shipping from 6% to 12% by 2047.

Annexure-1

Various measures taken by the Government to promote coastal shipping and cruise tourism:

1. **Promotion of coastal shipping:**
 - i. 40% concession on port charges (vessel and cargo-related charges) is provided for coastal cargo vessels.
 - ii. Priority berthing policy for coastal vessels has been notified to reduce vessel turnaround time and improve vessel utilization.
 - iii. GST on bunker fuel used by Indian-flagged vessels has been reduced from 18% to 5%.
 - iv. Green Channel clearance was introduced on 26.06.2026 for the faster evacuation of coastal cargo at ports.
 - v. The Coastal Shipping Act, 2025 has been enacted to promote coastal shipping which came into force with effect from 15.03.2026.
2. **Promotion of cruise tourism:**
 - i. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)-3 for Cruise Vessels at Indian Ports was issued by the Ministry of Tourism on 19.06.2025.
 - ii. International Cruise Terminals at Visakhapatnam (September 2023), Mumbai (September 2025) and Chennai (June 2026) have been upgraded and operationalized.
 - iii. The East Coast Cruise Circuit has been expanded with addition of Puducherry.
 - iv. Destination Task Forces have been constituted at all nine (09) cruise destinations and in addition at Gujarat Maritime Board to facilitate coordination among stakeholders.
 - v. QR-based Immigration Clearance System has been introduced, with Enroute Immigration Clearance options for Cruise Ships, reducing immigration clearance time to about 30 seconds per passenger.
 - vi. Merchant Overtime (MOT) charges for Customs clearance of cruise passengers and baggage have been exempted vide CBIC Circular dated 15.06.2026, to facilitate faster and seamless clearance of cruise passengers.
 - vii. Digitized customs procedures and self-declaration mechanism for cruise ships have been introduced to facilitate faster Customs clearance.
 - viii. e-Group Visit Visa has been introduced to facilitate entry of foreign tourist groups arriving by cruise vessels.
 - ix. Cruise ships are provided with guaranteed berthing, ousting charges have been removed and concessional uniform tariff is provided; and
 - x. Cabotage has been waived for foreign cruise vessels.
