

Cabinet approves of MoU between India and Bangladesh on Aids to Navigation (A to Ns)

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Aids to Navigation (AtoNs) between the Directorate General of Lighthouses & Lightships (DGLL), Ministry of Shipping, Government of India and the Department of Shipping, Government of Bangladesh.

The MoU envisages cooperation between Bangladesh and India:

- a. To extend advice on lighthouses and beacons;
- b. To extend advice on Vessel Traffic Service and chain of Automatic Identification System (AIS); and
- c. To impart training as per International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) training module to AtoN Managers and Technicians for Bangladesh.

The MoU will enable both the countries to collaborate in the following areas:

- a. To provide advice on AtoNs;
- b. Provide academic interaction by imparting training to AtoN personnel; and
- c. Provide necessary cooperation in organizing workshops/conferences for enhancement of skills in AtoN field.

The MoU will also help in greater cooperation in capacity building in the field of AtoN training in the South Asian region. This will give a boost to imparting training on the management of marine aids to navigation based on IALA Model Course E-141/1 and accordingly facilitate the delivery of a professional training course as per the IALA guidelines.

India and Bangladesh are two important developing nations in the South Asian region. Both countries maintain a long tradition of friendly and cordial relations which has been manifested in the several bilateral visits of dignitaries from both sides during recent years.

Background:

As per International Maritime Organisation's (IMO's) requirement, authorities in various countries, provide appropriate Aids to Navigation in their waters as per international recommendations and guidelines. Marine aids to navigation such as lighthouses, beacons, DGPS, navigational and mooring buoys are operated to enhance the safe and efficient navigation of vessels and/or vessel traffic. Directorate General of Lighthouses & Lightships establishes and maintains Aids to Navigation in India, for safe navigation in Indian waters. DGLL having expertise in lighthouse engineering maintains large inventory of Aids to navigation which includes 193 lighthouses, 64 Racons, 22 Deep Sea lighted buoys, 23

DGPS stations, 01 Lightship, 04 tender vessels, National AIS Network, Vessel Traffic Service in Gulf of Kutch.

IALA is the international body coordinating and harmonizing the use of all Aids to Navigation. India represented through DGLL, is a member of IALA Council. As a step towards regional cooperation, India and Bangladesh have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation on AtoN. As per the MoU, the DGLL on behalf of Ministry of Shipping, Government of India shall advise its counterpart Department of Shipping, Ministry of Shipping, Bangladesh on AtoNs including Vessel Traffic Service, Chain of Automatic Identification System. In order to train AtoN personnel of Bangladesh, DGLL shall organize training as per IALA training module to AtoN Managers and Technicians, organize Workshops/Conferences. This will help in capacity building of Bangladesh AtoN Personnel.

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