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National Maritime Heritage Complex

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Why is in news? Indian Coast Guard & Indian Navy sign MoU with Indian Port Rail & Ropeway Corporation Ltd for developing gallery at National Maritime Heritage Complex

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian Coast Guard & Indian Navy with Indian Port Rail & Ropeway Corporation Ltd for the planning, development, construction, and commissioning of a gallery on the theme "Evolution of Indian Navy & Indian Coast Guard" at the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) which is being constructed at the historic Indus Valley civilization region of Lothal (Gujarat).

The Government of India is building the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at the **historic Indus Valley civilization region of Lothal (Gujarat)** under the aegis of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

The foundation stone for the NMHC project was laid by Prime Minister in **March 2019**.

This envisages to **showcase India's rich and diverse Maritime Heritage**.

NMHC is **one of the major projects of Sagarmala Programme** under MoPSW and will be the world's biggest Maritime Museum complex'.

It would be **developed as an international tourist destination**, where the **maritime heritage of India from ancient to modern times would be showcased**.

The idea is to **create an edutainment (education with entertainment) approach** for this destination that would be of great interest for the visitors.

It is going to cover an area of 400 acres, with structures such as **Heritage Theme Park, National Maritime Heritage Museum, Lighthouse Museum, Maritime Institute, eco-resorts, and more**.

There will also be **many pavilions** where **all coastal states in India and union territories** can showcase their artifacts and maritime heritage.

The unique feature of NMHC is the recreation of ancient Lothal city, which is one of the prominent cities of the ancient Indus valley civilization.

It will have several innovative and unique features such as **Lothal mini recreation to recreate Harappan architecture and lifestyle**; four theme parks – Memorial theme park, Maritime and Navy theme park, Climate theme park, and Adventure and Amusement theme park; fourteen galleries highlighting India's maritime heritage starting from the Harappan times till now; Coastal states pavilion displaying the diverse maritime heritage of states and UTs; among others.

Lothal:

Lothal was one of the **southernmost cities of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization** located in Gujarat.

Construction of the city began **around 2400 BCE**.

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According to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Lothal had the **world's earliest known dock**, which connected the city to an ancient course of the **Sabarmati river** on the trade route between Harappan cities in Sindh and the peninsula of Saurashtra.

Lothal was a **vital and thriving trade Centre in ancient times**, with its trade of beads, gems, and valuable ornaments reaching the far corners of West Asia and Africa.

The techniques and tools they **pioneered for bead-making and in metallurgy** have stood the test of time for over 4000 years.

The Lothal site has been **nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site**, and its application is **pending on the tentative list of UNESCO**.