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From Opaque to Open: How Data Is Forcing Transparency into Global Shipping

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU PORT AUTHORITY

BIGGER, GREENER, GLOBAL

Our technology roadmap is anchored in three pillars: safety, efficiency, and transparency.

— Gaurav Dayal, IAS, Chairperson

Saudi Arabia's port expansion & regional growth strategy

ATAI: Engineering the Digital Nervous System of Global Logistics

Special Section

Logistics HR Summit 2026

THE FRAGILE CORRIDOR

When the Strait holds the world to ransom, India discovers how exposed it truly is

There is a number that every Indian energy planner carries but rarely says aloud. Approximately 30 per cent of India's crude oil imports and 90 per cent of its LPG supplies transit a waterway 33 kilometres wide at its narrowest point. India consumes roughly 5.5 million barrels of crude oil every day, and for decades the Strait of Hormuz was the silent, taken-for-granted artery through which that lifeblood flowed. In the early weeks of March 2026, the artery came under threat and India scrambled.

The numbers tell the story with uncomfortable clarity. India is the second-largest destination for crude oil transiting the Strait, receiving 14.7 per cent of total Hormuz flows. Bangladesh, India and Pakistan together imported almost two-thirds of their LNG supplies via the Strait in 2025. Unlike crude, LNG has no alternative pipeline bypass. When Qatar's tankers cannot move, India's gas terminals face a cliff.

The government's response was swift but improvised. The Ministry of Petroleum declared that 70 per cent of India's crude imports were now sourced outside the Strait, up from 55 per cent, achieved through a rapid pivot to Russian crude, West African barrels, and Americas-origin cargoes. Refineries were pushed beyond rated capacity. A Natural Gas Control Order under the Essential Commodities Act managed LPG distribution, prioritising households. The machinery worked, barely, held together by inter-ministerial coordination rather than any standing institutional framework.

The insurance dimension bit hardest. All 12 members of the International Group of P&I Clubs issued 72-hour cancellation notices on war-risk cover in the Gulf. Hull premiums surged from 0.25 per cent to 1 per cent of vessel value per voyage. Daily charter rates for super tankers quadrupled to nearly 800,000 dollars within a week. The crisis also impacted 23,000 Indian seafarers, laying bear the cost of having no domestic P&I ecosystem.

The structural lesson is plain. Resilience requires architecture, not improvisation. The Union Cabinet's approval of the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool in April 2026 is a belated but important step. Strategic reserves, supply diversification, and a sovereign reinsurance backstop are the pillars India must now build in earnest. The Strait of Hormuz has never been permanently closed. But priced-out insurance and anchored tankers can bring India's energy supply chain to the edge of crisis just as effectively.

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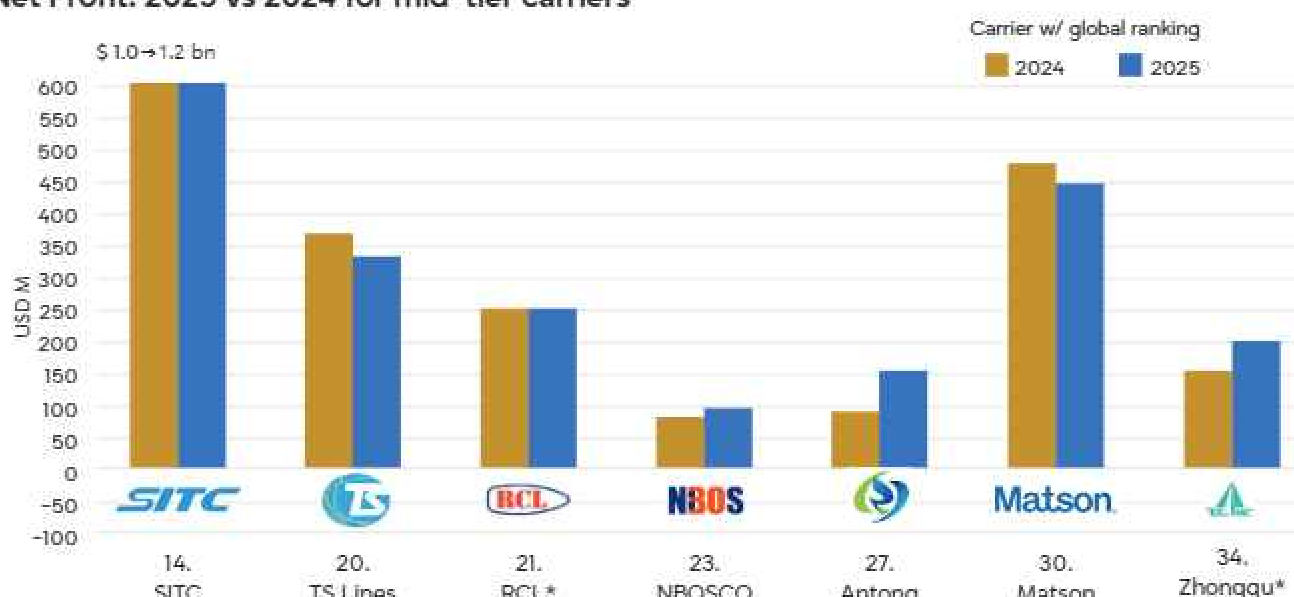
TOP 25 GLOBAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS

This shows the ranking of the top 25 global freight forwarders based on their gross logistics revenue in US$ Millions.

Source: Industry Reports & A&A Research

Net Profit: 2025 vs 2024 for mid-tier carriers



KANDLA PIONEERS METHANOL BUNKERING

Deendayal Port Authority (Kandla) has conducted India's first successful shore-to-ship methanol bunkering trial, conducted in collaboration with Stolt Tankers, IOCL, Aegis Vopak and J M Baxi. DNV Maritime Advisory rated the port at Level 6 on the IAPH Port Readiness Level scale — among the highest internationally. The port plans to make approximately 500 KTPA of RFNBO-compliant e-methanol available by 2028–29, targeting deep-sea dual-fuel vessels on the Asia-Europe trade corridor.

DEENDAYAL PORT HANDLES LNG TANK EXPORT TO BAHAMAS

Deendayal Port (Kandla) successfully handled the export of an LNG tank bound for the Bahamas, marking a significant project cargo milestone for the port. The operation involved specialist heavy-lift coordination and underlines India's growing capability to handle complex, high-value project cargo for international markets. The LNG tank export adds to Kandla's expanding portfolio of green-energy-related cargo operations, complementing its methanol bunkering push and reinforcing the port's strategic role in India's energy transition supply chain.

SAGARMALA FINANCE TO RAISE $1 BILLION IN FY27

Sagarmala Finance Corporation (SFC), India's first maritime-focused NBFC, plans to raise ₹10,000 crore ($1.08 billion) in FY27 through bonds, term loans and external commercial borrowings.

MD L.V.S. Sudhakar Babu said FY27 disbursals target ₹8,000–9,000 crore, with ₹11,100 crore already sanctioned including greenfield ports in Andhra Pradesh. AA+ rated by CARE and ICRA, SFC administers the ₹25,000 crore Maritime Development Fund and aims to bridge the 30-year financing gaps that have long plagued maritime infrastructure.

SAGARMALA
PORT-LED PROSPERITY

100 SHIPS SEEK REFUGE AT VIZHINJAM AMID GULF CRISIS

Kerala's Vizhinjam International Seaport, operated by Adani Ports, has become an unexpected haven for vessels fleeing the turmoil in the Gulf, with nearly 100 ships from eight global shipping lines seeking refuge at its berths. As the Strait of Hormuz crisis forced carriers to reroute away from congested UAE ports urgently, Vizhinjam's strategic position made it the natural port of call; a ready sanctuary on India's southwestern tip. Located just 10 nautical miles from prime east-west shipping lanes, the deepwater transshipment hub has absorbed traffic from Europe, South America, China and Singapore-bound corridors, offering a lifeline to lines scrambling for alternatives. Its natural 20-metre draught accommodates ultra-large 24,000 TEU vessels — saving carriers 500-plus nautical miles versus Mumbai or Mundra — cementing its role not just as a convenience, but as the subcontinent's most critical transshipment refuge in a time of crisis.

INDIA'S FIRST AMMONIA-POWERED BULK CARRIER ORDER SECURED

Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Ltd (SDHI) has clinched India's first-ever order for ammonia dual-fuel vessels — four 92,500 DWT bulk carriers for Energy ONE Ltd, to be built at its Pipavav yard in Gujarat. Each 229.5-metre vessel will be designed by South Korean firm KMS-EMEC and classed by DNV. The first delivery is slated for October 2029. Valued between ₹1,501 and ₹3,000 crore, the deal is backed by New Energy One, a $2 billion Jersey-registered green shipping fund that has also signed an MoU with Sagarmala Finance Corporation, cementing a direct link to India's maritime finance ecosystem.

CONCOR AREA 1 TERMINALS SET NEW RECORD

CONCOR's Area 1 terminals have established a new benchmark for rail cargo handling, posting record volumes in the latest reporting period. The milestone comes on the back of the Western DFC's full commissioning and reflects growing shipper confidence in rail as a competitive alternative to road freight for container movement. RVNL also appointed Ashutosh Gautam as Executive Director (Civil), signalling continued momentum in railway infrastructure expansion that underpins India's multimodal logistics ambitions.

INDIA'S MARINE EXPORTS CROSS ₹62,408 CRORE

India's marine sector posted exports of ₹62,408 crore in FY25, consolidating its position as a key contributor to agricultural export earnings. The figure underlines robust global demand for Indian seafood and processed marine products even as freight disruptions from the Hormuz crisis and Red Sea rerouting added cost pressures on outbound logistics. India simultaneously expanded West Asia export relief to cover 12 nations amid the Gulf turmoil, providing rate support and berth priority at major ports for affected cargo.

CMA CGM REFLAGS FIFTH VESSEL UNDER INDIAN FLAG

French shipping major CMA CGM has reflagged its fifth container vessel under the Indian registry, reinforcing its commitment to India's burgeoning maritime sector. The ceremony at a key west coast port marked the reflagging of the vessel, following three in 2025 and one earlier this year. This aligns with Maritime India Vision 2030 incentives, including tax benefits and cabotage relaxations. The move bolsters India's goal of capturing 5% of global tonnage by 2030. CMA CGM plans a sixth reflagging by May's end and has ordered six LNG-powered 1,700 TEU vessels from Cochin Shipyard—all to fly the Indian flag—reviving local shipbuilding post-Hormuz disruptions. India-flagged ships gain priority berthing at JNPA, Mundra, and Vizhinjam, which is handling queues of 100 ships diverted by the Hormuz blockade. Benefits extend to coastal trade and faster hinterland links via DFC.

Saudi Arabia's port expansion & regional growth strategy

In this article, Gagan Seksaria outlines how Saudi Arabia is emerging as a global logistics hub through Vision 2030, PIF-backed port expansion, multimodal connectivity.

Gagan Seksaria
Director – Global Investments at Red Sea Gateway Terminal (RSGT)

Saudi Arabia is redefining its role in global trade. Once primarily recognised as an energy powerhouse, the Kingdom is now emerging as a major logistics and maritime hub driven by large-scale port expansion, sovereign-backed investment and a clear long-term vision. According to Gagan Seksaria, Director – Global Investments at Red Sea Gateway Terminal (RSGT), Saudi Arabia's approach reflects a rare blend of state leadership, private-sector efficiency and global ambition. "Saudi Arabia is no longer just expanding ports – it is re-engineering its entire trade architecture in line with Vision 2030 and the realities of modern supply chains," said Seksaria. At the heart of this transformation is the Public Investment Fund (PIF), Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund which now manages assets exceeding $1 trillion. With PIF as a key shareholder, the country's leading terminal operators have the ability to scale quickly both domestically and internationally.

Having the Public Investment Fund as our shareholder gives us more than just access to capital – it gives us strategic stability, long-term vision, and the confidence to invest at scale," noted Seksaria. "It allows us to take a much longer view of value creation than traditional investors can afford.

Accelerating capacity on the Red Sea coast

In mid-2025, four major terminals along the western coast of Saudi Arabia came under unified management. These include two terminals in Yanbu, a facility in Jazan, and expanded operations at Jeddah Islamic Port. Combined, they represent a massive 100 million tonnes of total handling capacity. Historically centred on container operations at Jeddah, Red Sea Gateway Terminal has now expanded its operational mandate into multi-cargo terminals, integrated services, and end-to-end logistics solutions even as it continues to expand its operations on the container side as evidenced by the signing of a non-binding term sheet between RSGT and CMA CGM in October 2025 setting a clear pathway for the negotiation of a sub-concession agreement for operating Terminal 4 at Jeddah Islamic Port under RSGT's existing concession in the port with a planned investment of $450 million.

These do not just represent capacity or geographic expansion, they form keycomponents of a strategic, long-term expansion," said Seksaria. "By strengthening our footprint on the west coast, we are reinforcing Saudi Arabia's role as a critical bridge between Asia, Africa and Europe.

The Red Sea's importance to global shipping, however, has also made it vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions—sparking the need for innovative contingency planning.

Building alternatives to traditional trade routes

Recent instability in the Red Sea has underscored the risks of overdependence on a single maritime corridor. In response, Saudi stakeholders are working together to build alternative inland and regional trade pathways. A centrepiece of this strategy is the proposed land bridge rail corridor connecting Jeddah and Riyadh, which would allow cargo arriving at the Red Sea to be transported across the country to the eastern ports for onward shipment. "The land bridge is not merely a logistics project; it is a strategic lifeline," Seksaria explained. "It creates redundancy in the system and gives us the flexibility to redirect cargo during times of maritime disruption." During earlier periods of disruption, cargo movement via road networks provided a workable solution. The future rail corridor is expected to significantly enhance speed, cost efficiency and sustainability. In parallel, Saudi Arabia is also exploring regional partnerships, including the use of Omani ports as supplementary gateways.

The modern logistics network is not built on competition alone, but on smart collaboration," remarked

Seksaria. "By linking with regional ports, we can help create a more resilient and efficient supply chain for the entire Gulf region.

First international milestone: Chittagong, Bangladesh

Saudi Arabia's first major international terminal investment was secured in December 2023 when Red Sea Gateway Terminal signed a 22-year concession to equip and operate a terminal at Chittagong Port, Bangladesh. Despite political turbulence in the region, the terminal has been successfully operationalised. With an investment commitment of $240 million, the project represents a strategic entry into one of the world's fastest-growing export economies. "Bangladesh is a compelling market – young, dynamic and export-driven," said Seksaria. "Our presence in Chittagong not only captures growth, but also positions us at the intersection of South and Southeast Asian supply chains."

The success of Chittagong has prompted further exploration of opportunities across:

- **South Asia,** including further larger-scale investments in Bangladesh
- **East Africa and the Horn of Africa,** with its untapped trade potential
- **South Africa,** where privatisation initiatives are gaining momentum
- **Southeast Asia,** a rising global manufacturing and consumption hub with a strong focus on Indonesia and Vietnam in particular

Several of these projects are currently under evaluation, in some cases in partnership with international financial institutions or local partners. "Our strategy is simple but disciplined – identify high-growth corridors, partner with the right stakeholders, and deploy capital where it can make the most transformative impact," added Seksaria.

The road to 30 million TEUs

Looking ahead, Red Sea Gateway Terminal has set an ambitious goal of a a multi-million TEU portfolio across Saudi and internationally over the next five years, potentially increasing overall volumes by several times. "We are not looking at incremental change. This is a generational scale-up that requires planning, partnerships and precision in execution," explained Seksaria. This growth is aligned with Saudi Arabia's expanding consumer base of more than 34 million people, along with rising demand for food security, raw materials, manufactured goods and e-commerce-driven imports.

In mid-2025, four major terminals along the western coast of Saudi Arabia came under unified management. These include two terminals in Yanbu, a facility in Jazan, and expanded operations at Jeddah Islamic Port. Combined, they represent a massive 100 million tonnes of total handling capacity.

A new era for Saudi maritime power

Under the umbrella of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is transitioning from an energy-centric economy to a diversified powerhouse. Ports and logistics are key pillars of this transformation.

Through strategic consolidation, global expansion, and infrastructure-led resilience planning, Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a cornerstone of global maritime stability.

In the coming decade, Saudi Arabia will be a key mover of global trade – not just energy, but data, goods, equipment, and complete supply chains," said Seksaria. "The port sector sits at the heart of this new Saudi economy.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU PORT AUTHORITY

BIGGER, GREENER, GLOBAL

Gaurav Dayal, IAS (2004 UP Cadre), Chairperson of JNPA sits down for an extensive aerial view of JNPA, and what the coming years look like for the port.

-By Ramprasad Ravi

Investments & Expansion

- **Max vessel size accommodated:** Ships up to 18,000 TEUs
- **Vessel turnaround time:** Averaging 22.75 hours
- **NSICT quay length:** 600 metres with two berths
- **BMCT planned full capacity:** 4.8 million TEUs per annum with a quay length of 2,000 metres after full phase completion
- **Container Freight Stations (CFS):** 30 CFS on-port
- **Inland Container Depots (ICD):** 52 ICD connections across the country
- **ADB loan for NSFT upgrade:** $131 million to improve the terminal's infrastructure, increase container handling capacity, and install energy-efficient equipment
- **New highway project:** A six-lane greenfield high-speed national highway connecting JNPA to Chowk (29.2 km) approved at ₹4,500 crore

JN Port has further strengthened its position as India's leading container gateway. How do you assess its FY 2025–26 performance in throughput, productivity, and finances? Which achievements stand out, and where is further improvement needed?

In FY 2025–26, JNPA has delivered a strong, broad-based performance across throughput, productivity, and financial indicators. In CY 2025, the port achieved its highest-ever container handling of 7.94 million TEUs, registering a robust year-on-year increase and giving us confidence that we will cross the 8 million TEU mark by the end of the current financial year.

Among our key achievements, we are particularly proud that JNPA has emerged as India's largest container port and has been ranked 23rd globally and No. 1 in India in the World Bank–S&P Global CPPI 2024, while also being recognised among the top 20 global improvers during 2020–2024, underscoring gains in efficiency and service quality. On the financial side, operating income has grown from about ₹1,900 crore in FY 2019–20 to ₹3,262 crore in FY 2024–25, a CAGR of 9.45%, and we expect it to rise to around ₹3,900 crore in FY 2025–26, an 18.53% increase over FY 2024–25, in line with traffic growth and better capacity utilisation. Over the last six years, EBITA has grown at a CAGR of 8.94%, and for FY 2025–26 we expect a higher growth rate of 9.19%, supported by a lower operating ratio of 32% versus 34% in FY 2024–25, reflecting continuous efforts to curb inefficiencies, reduce wasteful expenditure, and strengthen financial discipline.

Looking ahead, there is still meaningful scope to improve sustainability and green-port initiatives. We are actively exploring LNG bunkering, alternative fuels, and cleaner technologies, while intensifying our focus on operational efficiency, digitalisation, and productivity so that growth remains both robust and environmentally sustainable over the long term.

Amid global trade volatility and rising regional competition, what is your outlook for FY 2025–27? Will growth be driven more by traditional cargo, new trade corridors, or value-added logistics?

JNPA has consolidated its position as India's largest container port, with an installed capacity of over 10 million TEUs. In the current global environment—marked by shifting trade flows, evolving shipping alliances, and near-term volatility—we remain cautiously optimistic about throughput in FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27.

We expect to maintain our upward trajectory and aim for continued double-digit growth in container traffic, broadly in line with last year, and remain confident of achieving 8 million TEUs by the end of this financial year. Core containerised EXIM cargo from established markets will remain a stable base, supported

by India's growing manufacturing capabilities and domestic consumption.
Expansion of SEZ-led manufacturing, warehousing, multimodal connectivity, and port-centric logistics will increasingly drive incremental volumes and deepen JNPA's role as an integrated logistics hub.

JN Port has been investing heavily in capacity. Can you update us on key projects—new terminals, berth upgrades, and yard expansions?
Recent capacity augmentation has been a major turning point for JNPA. The commissioning of BMCT Phase II and the capacity expansion at Nhava Sheva Free Port Terminal (NSFT) from 0.6 million TEUs to 1.8 million TEUs have together raised JNPA's overall container-handling capacity to over 10.4 million TEUs, firmly positioning it as India's largest container port.

These developments mark the effective utilisation of all major brownfield capacity within the existing Nhava Sheva footprint. With most available space now optimised, our strategic focus is shifting to greenfield expansion through the development of Vadhvan Port, envisaged as a next-generation deep-draft gateway that will cater to long-term national demand, handle larger vessels, and significantly enhance India's competitiveness in global container shipping networks.

Our technology roadmap is anchored in three pillars: safety, efficiency, and transparency.

As JN Port positions itself as a model Green Port, which concrete green transportation initiatives are in place? Will the battery-swapping electric truck model be scaled up, and what is your roadmap for shore power and cleaner vessel-side energy?
JNPA has begun a systematic transition towards cleaner mobility across its operations. We have already deployed electric and CNG vehicles for internal usage, and electric trucks operate within the container yards, supported by a battery-swapping ecosystem. Two battery-swapping stations and six charging points are currently functional, and this infrastructure will be scaled up in line with the growth of the electric fleet.

We have set a clear target to replace all diesel tractor-trailers operating within the port with battery-operated trucks by 2028, which would make JNPA the first port in India to operate a fully green internal trucking ecosystem. In parallel, official cars and buses are being converted to electric vehicles, further reducing Scope 1 emissions.

On the waterside, JNPA is implementing shore-to-ship power to reduce carbon emissions from vessels at berth. Phase I covers one container terminal at an estimated cost of about ₹98 crore, and the tender has already been floated. Following successful implementation, Phase II will extend shore power to the remaining terminals by 2028, with an estimated investment of around ₹2,480 crore. Beyond this, we are actively exploring green hydrogen and LNG bunkering to support cleaner marine fuels and align with global decarbonisation goals.

For shippers, predictability and service quality are as critical as capacity. What new initiatives has JN Port taken to improve customer experience in documentation, dwell time, digital processes, and stakeholder coordination?

From a shipper's standpoint, we recognise that reliability, visibility, and ease of doing business are as critical as physical capacity. JNPA has therefore focused on digitisation, process simplification, and tighter stakeholder coordination to enhance the overall customer experience.
On the marine side, we have deployed an indigenous Harbour Management System along with an Integrated Vessel Traffic Management System, which together enable more efficient vessel planning, real-time monitoring, and better on-time berthing performance. On the landside, automated gate systems, a Truck Appointment System, and a Centralised Parking Plaza have been introduced to decongest terminal gates and reduce truck turnaround times.

We are progressing towards a comprehensive Digital Twin of the port, which will provide end-to-end operational visibility, support scenario planning, and enable faster decision-making. Implementation of "One Nation One Port" processes, integration with the National Logistics Portal (Marine), and adoption of the Maritime Single Window have reduced

manual interventions and simplified regulatory workflows. Looking ahead, the proposed automooring system is expected to further improve vessel turnaround by enabling faster, safer berthing and unberthing operations.

As ports worldwide embrace automation, AI, and digital twins, what are JN Port's technology priorities? Are you moving toward a fully integrated smart-port ecosystem, and how will this translate into measurable operational gains?

Our technology roadmap is anchored in three pillars: safety, efficiency, and transparency. JNPA terminals have already deployed AI-driven safety solutions that are transforming how we manage risk—these tools are not just recording incidents but helping to predict and prevent them.

We are leveraging AI and machine learning for route optimisation, demand forecasting, inventory management, warehouse automation, predictive maintenance, and yard optimisation. Automated reefer monitoring solutions enable real-time, intelligent tracking of refrigerated containers, ensuring cargo safety and regulatory compliance. Complementing these, GPS-based vehicle monitoring and advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) bring AI-enabled fleet management and driver safety into everyday operations. Digital twin implementation will allow us to create virtual replicas of key port assets and processes to run simulations, test scenarios, and optimise workflows before changes are made in the real world. Priority use cases include vessel operations, environmental monitoring, and the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), which is designed to integrate GPS, National Logistics Portal interfaces, M/E seals, and ULIP, enabling real-time monitoring of trailer movements, heat maps of port areas, and automated alerts in case of congestion, accidents, or disruptions.

These initiatives will be supported by 5G-enabled high-speed connectivity, essential for powering IoT devices at scale, integrating port operations with hinterland logistics, and deploying AI-enabled systems for vendor invoice verification and pre- and post-tender checks. Over time, this integrated smart-port ecosystem is expected to deliver measurable improvements in turnaround times, asset utilisation, safety performance, and customer satisfaction.

JNPA SEZ posted 27% year-on-year growth in container handling in CY 2025. What drove this; tenant mix, infrastructure, or policy support—and which industrial and logistics activities will anchor its next phase of growth?

The 27% year-on-year growth in container handling at JNPA SEZ in CY 2025 is the result of a combination of strong infrastructure, streamlined procedures, and supportive policies. Robust internal infrastructure, along with single-window clearances for building permissions, fire safety, water, and electricity, has made it significantly easier for units to set up and scale operations.

As a developer, JNPA SEZ has focused on ease of doing business, with simple, transparent processes and close coordination with statutory authorities, reinforcing investor and tenant confidence. Sustainability is another defining feature: the SEZ currently supplies about 90% green power to units, at a significantly lower cost than external sources, and as a distribution licensee we can pass on these benefits directly. Extensive greening, including the plantation of over two lakh trees with prominent Miyawaki plantations, has further strengthened its profile.

An Integrated Command and Control Centre is under development to provide digital visibility of manpower, vehicles, and cargo, alongside an advanced surveillance framework. The SEZ's strategic location—just 5 km from JNPA—with strong road and rail connectivity to the hinterland has reduced logistics costs and improved competitiveness. Importantly, this growth has been achieved with only 11 operational units so far.

Over the next 2–3 years, as sectors such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals, electronics, engineering goods, warehousing, and Free Trade and Warehousing Zones (FTWZ) scale up, we expect a much stronger growth trajectory. Enhanced rail connectivity through the WDFC, the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport, and a sharper focus on multimodal logistics will help JNPA SEZ handle higher-value cargo and play a larger role in global supply chains.

Looking beyond immediate targets, what is your five-year vision for JN Port, and how do you want it positioned within Asia's competitive maritime landscape?
Over the next five years, JNPA's priorities are clearly defined and aligned with national maritime objectives and our own strategic roadmap. Given our current growth momentum and capacity, we expect to be able to handle more than 12 million TEUs over the next three to four years, further strengthening our role as India's premier container gateway.

Our foremost objective is the timely progress and completion of Phase 1 of the Vadhvan Port Project, which will serve as the next major capacity engine on the western coast and complement JNPA's existing gateway operations. In parallel, we are committed to transforming JNPA into a 100% green and sustainable port, with a strong emphasis on renewable energy, low-emission equipment, and environmentally responsible infrastructure.

A third core priority is the on-schedule completion of trade-enabling projects such as the Agro Processing & Storage Facility, Empty Container Yard, and ongoing digital and physical infrastructure upgrades. Collectively, these initiatives will enhance operational efficiency, deepen our integration with the broader logistics ecosystem, and position JNPA as a benchmark port in Asia in terms of capacity, sustainability, and service standards.

Vadhvan Port is being developed as a major greenfield facility with ambitions to be among the world's top 10 ports. What is its current status, and which milestones are you targeting in the next 6–12 months to stay on schedule?
At present, the key focus for the Vadhvan Port Project is land acquisition, which is a prerequisite for starting nearshore reclamation and related onshore works. Land required for road and rail connectivity will be acquired by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), while funding will be provided by Vadhvan Port Project Ltd (VPPL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) set up by JNPA.

The project has three major engineering components: a nearshore reclamation area with shore protection, an offshore reclamation area, and construction of a 10.14-kilometre breakwater. Road and rail connectivity form separate but inter-linked components and also depend on the land acquisition process. In total, around 606 hectares will be acquired, and VPPL estimates that approximately ₹2,000 crore (now budgeted closer to ₹2,300 crore) will be spent on land acquisition and compensation. Importantly, while land from 24 villages is involved, no inhabitants will be physically displaced; awards for 21 villages have already been forwarded by the district collector to NHAI.

Over the next 6–12 months, key milestones include completing land acquisition formalities, resolving pending approvals, and initiating core reclamation and breakwater works. From a funding standpoint, there is no constraint on meeting compensation obligations or progressing with the planned engineering activities.

What are the biggest challenges you currently face in the Vadhvan Port project—technical, non-technical, or funding-related?
The most significant challenges at this stage are non-technical. Forest clearances for road and rail alignments, as well as permissions for quarrying and sourcing construction materials, are still in process. In parallel, we have encountered headwinds in land acquisition due to concerns raised by local villagers and fishermen, especially around livelihoods, environmental impacts, and long-term sustainability.

There have been
in the Palghar
take seriously. The
is that fisherfolk
house-to-house
the extent of fish-
family, which
for designing an
fair compensation
prolonged delay
and clearances
cascading impact
project timelines, and
working closely with stakeholders to find a balanced, inclusive path forward.

Beyond its scale as a mega port, what will be Vadhvan's unique value proposition once it is fully developed?
Vadhvan Port is poised to be a transformative project for India's maritime sector. With a natural draft of 18–20 metres, it will be among the few Indian ports capable of regularly handling Ultra Large Container Vessels (ULCVs), significantly reducing India's dependence on foreign transhipment hubs such as Colombo, Singapore, and Jebel Ali, thereby lowering logistics costs, shortening transit times, and strengthening India's competitiveness in global trade lanes.

The port has been designed as a 100% green facility from inception, incorporating clean energy, low-emission technologies, and environmentally responsible infrastructure. Strategically, it will lie along key international routes, including the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor and the International North-South Transport Corridor, positioning it as a major gateway for EXIM trade. Beyond port operations, Vadhvan will act as a catalyst for regional and national economic development, creating significant opportunities in logistics, warehousing, value-added services, and allied industries. Its unique value proposition lies not just in scale, but in its ability to reshape India's role in global maritime trade and support a more resilient, competitive logistics ecosystem.

> *"Given our current growth momentum and capacity, we expect to be able to handle more than 12 million TEUs over the next three to four years, further strengthening our role as India's premier container gateway.*

India at the Crossroads - Energy, Geopolitics, and the Seas Ahead

India's energy security, export competitiveness, and geopolitical balancing act are all being tested at once. In this conversation, Punit Oza cuts through the policy rhetoric to assess how much runway India actually has.

-By Kalpana Pandey

Punit Oza, FICS
Founder & Director, Maritime NXT

The IMO's 2050 net-zero ambitions are reshaping global shipping. Where does India stand on green bunkering — and is it at risk of falling behind?
India has the policy ambitions — Harit Sagar, the National Green Hydrogen Mission, Maritime India Vision 2030 — but no Indian port currently offers routine commercial green bunkering. LNG exists only in nascent form at Kochi; methanol is under construction at VOC Port; green ammonia infrastructure at Kandla and Paradip remains largely on paper.

The deeper problem is that India's green fuel strategy is oriented toward production and export, with maritime bunkering as a secondary application. India is not at risk of permanent irrelevance — its geography on the East-West trade route and its cost advantages in green fuel production are genuine assets. But the critical window is the next two to three years, before IMO's 2027–28 GHG intensity rules lock in bunkering network decisions globally. If port timelines slip, as they often do, India will find itself competing against already-operational hubs in Singapore, Rotterdam, and the Gulf from a standing start.

India imports nearly 88% of its crude oil needs. How exposed is the country if the West Asia crisis deepens?
Deeply exposed — and more so than the official numbers suggest. Over 60% of India's crude imports originate from Gulf producers,

The conditions that made strategic ambiguity sustainable are eroding simultaneously across all four axes — the Israel relationship, Tehran, BRICS, and Global South credibility. What has changed is that economic pressure is now forcing the clock in ways that domestic politics cannot absorb indefinitely.

and roughly 52% transit the Strait of Hormuz. India's strategic petroleum reserves at Mangalore, Padur, and Visakhapatnam hold only about 25 million barrels — just 9 to 10 days of cover in a complete shutdown. When commercial stocks are added, the buffer extends to 70 days on paper, but the functional ceiling before severe economic disruption is closer to 40 to 50 days.

The LPG dimension is arguably India's sharpest vulnerability. Around 90% of LPG imports transit Hormuz, directly affecting 300 million households dependent on cooking gas. India's posture is best described as managed vulnerability, not genuine resilience. A prolonged Hormuz disruption would move from a price shock to a supply crisis faster than official buffers suggest.

How long can India sustain its multi-directional balancing act in West Asia before it is forced to take clearer positions?

The conditions that made strategic ambiguity sustainable are eroding simultaneously across all four axes — the Israel relationship, Tehran, BRICS, and Global South credibility. What has changed is that economic pressure is now forcing the clock in ways that domestic politics cannot absorb indefinitely. India's crude basket has surged 40% since January, the rupee is at record lows, over 9 million diaspora workers are at risk in Gulf countries, and Hormuz ship transits have fallen from 200–300 per week to fewer than twenty.

In my reading, India has roughly 60 to 90 days before three hard deadlines converge: the BRICS foreign ministers meeting in mid-May, the Kharif agricultural season, and sustained fiscal pressure. The likely outcome is not a dramatic break from non-alignment, but a gradient shift — sharper language on the Hormuz blockade without naming Iran, a BRICS humanitarian resolution that sidesteps war-guilt, and deeper naval coordination with the US under existing frameworks.

Punit Oza is President & Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers, UK, and a Senior Adjunct Fellow at the Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore Academy. With over three decades in dry bulk shipping — spanning Precious Shipping, Noble Group, and Torvald Klaveness — he now lectures globally on geopolitical risk and its impact on trade flows, and hosts a monthly podcast on geopolitics and maritime trade with Seatrade.

The Red Sea disruptions have caused severe freight cost spikes. Are India's MSMEs structurally protected — or structurally exposed?

Structurally exposed, and absorbing the shock in the worst possible way — defensively and individually. Emergency Conflict Surcharges of $2,000–$4,000 per container sit on top of base rates that have surged over 300%. Transit times on India-Europe routes have stretched from 15 days to over 45 days via the Cape diversion. Textile exporters are reporting margin erosion of 5–8% from logistics costs alone. The government's RELIEF Scheme and the broader Export Promotion Mission are correct in instinct but are reactive frameworks retrofitted onto a structural problem. What India needs is a Maritime Trade Resilience Fund — a standing mechanism with pre-negotiated freight hedging instruments and automatic ECGC activation triggers calibrated to a corridor stress index. Until that architecture exists, every new crisis will produce a new acronym, and MSMEs will keep absorbing the gap between the scheme and the actual cost.

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Driving the Future:
Why Inclusion and Diversity Matter in Logistics

By **Sudeshna Sen Sharma, Director** – Human Resources, Kuehne+Nagel India, Sri Lanka & the Maldives

-By Kalpana Pandey

Sudeshna Sen Sharma,
Director – Human Resources, Kuehne+Nagel India, Sri Lanka & the Maldives

A common misconception is that logistics is limited to physically demanding roles and traditionally male-dominated environments. In reality, as the supply chains grow more complex and consumer expectations rise, the industry now offers a wide spectrum of opportunities beyond the warehouse floor.

The logistics industry in India is on the brink of transformation. The sector is projected to reach a market size of USD 383.77 billion by 2026 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9.07% between 2026 and 2031, according to a Mordor Intelligence report. As the supply chains become more complex and demand quicker and smarter execution, companies must rethink the way they build and empower their workforces.

In an industry that values agility, seamless collaboration, and flexibility, the need for varied perspectives, problem-solving styles, and real-world experiences is more critical than ever. It is becoming ever more apparent that Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) are not just goodwill efforts, they are essential to meeting the evolving needs of diverse industries. A diverse workforce brings fresh perspectives and innovative solutions, enabling companies to adapt, grow, and lead successful transformations in an increasingly complex logistics landscape.

Changing Face of Logistics in India and Globally

A common misconception is that logistics is limited to physically demanding roles and traditionally male-dominated environments. In reality, as the supply chains grow more complex and consumer expectations rise, the industry now offers a wide spectrum of opportunities beyond the warehouse floor. From strategic planning and technology-driven operations to customer experience and sustainability, logistics today requires a diverse range of skills, opening the door for more inclusive talent participation than ever before.

Understanding Diversity and Inclusion in Logistics: From Efficiency to Innovation

Bringing together people from varied backgrounds delivers both cultural richness and measurable business advantages. When teams include a wide range of perspectives across gender, ethnicity, age, abilities, and life experiences they consistently outshine the more uniform groups in terms of creativity, decision-making speed, and adaptability.

Inclusion ensures that all voices are heard and leveraged, leading to more nuanced risk assessment, more creative solutions, and greater alignment with the needs of an increasingly diverse customer base. For instance, age diversity allows for the blending of digital-native perspectives with operational wisdom. Cultural diversity helps in localizing services effectively across varied geographies. Neurodiverse employees often bring unique strengths in data analysis, pattern recognition, and process improvement.

Moreover, inclusive teams tend to have better retention rates and higher employee engagement. In a sector grappling with talent shortages and high attrition, this becomes a strategic advantage.

Closing the Gap: What Industry Needs to Do Now

While substantial progress has been made in advancing D&I, particularly in areas like warehousing where India has seen double-digit representation, and in supply chain planning significant gaps remain in leadership, field operations, and boardroom diversity. Much of the progress has been driven by automation and technological advancements, which are helping to reduce barriers. However, to truly close these essential gaps, businesses must move beyond well-intentioned statements and embed inclusive practices into their policies, procedures, and performance metrics. This begins with inclusive hiring processes, such as outreach programs targeting underrepresented groups, fair screening mechanisms, recruitment strategies and structured interview panels. But hiring is only the first step. Companies must create environments where diverse talent can thrive such as flexible work arrangements, returnship programs for second-career professionals, and workplace accessibility for people with disabilities. Leadership buy-in is critical. D&I goals must be championed at the highest levels, with measurable goals tied to business outcomes. Training programs on unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and allyship can shift mindsets and build a more equitable culture. Mentorship and sponsorship programs that actively support the progression of diverse talent into leadership roles are important.

Equally important is cultivating a strong sense of community. When Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), inclusion councils, and open-dialogue forums are in place, employees have safe spaces to share experiences, build relationships, and collaborate on fresh ideas. Practical steps like offering on-site childcare for working parents, flexible hybrid work options, graduate training programs, and dedicated talent-development initiatives help turn that promise into everyday reality. When inclusion becomes an everyday reality, it strengthens company culture, drives innovation, and ensures the logistics industry is equipped for a more equitable and resilient future.

Creating a Future-Ready Workforce for Industry Growth

As India's logistics industry continues to grow, its long-term success will depend not only on infrastructure and technology, but also on people. A diverse and inclusive workforce brings broader perspectives, stronger problem-solving, and solutions that better reflect the market.

Diversity & Inclusion in Logistics

- **Gartner's 2024 Women in Supply Chain Survey:** Women comprise **40%** of the global supply chain workforce, marking a significant rise.
- **In India, She Moves Logistics report (Udaiti Foundation and CII):** Women represent just **7%** of the workforce in NSE-listed logistics firms.
- **Senior roles in India:** Only **44%** of these companies have at least one woman in a senior position.
- **Broader D&I focus:** Efforts should go beyond gender to include diverse ages, geographies, educational backgrounds, and abilities (e.g., people with disabilities).
- **Importance:** Understanding D&I in logistics is key to fostering a resilient and innovative industry.

From Opaque to Open

How Data Is Forcing Transparency into Global Shipping

On Xeneta's own description of its ocean platform, the aim is explicit: "Stop negotiating in the dark." This article dives into the shift in transparency policies across boards within the shipping industry, and why it is the need of the hour. Xeneta does not impose, it gives you the luxury of choice.

-By Ramprasad Ravi

For decades, container shipping worked like a private club. Freight rates were negotiated behind closed doors, service quality was assessed through anecdotes, and container availability often depended on relationships rather than reliable signals. The industry did not just tolerate information asymmetry, it was built on it. That era is now being challenged by something shipping has historically struggled to scale: shared data. A new generation of analytics platforms is turning what used to be a black box into measurable, comparable market intelligence. Rates can be benchmarked lane by lane. Carrier performance can be tracked over time. Equipment stress can be inferred before it becomes a crisis. Shipping is not suddenly predictable, but it is becoming far less opaque. The timing is not accidental. The past few years have delivered a reality check that procurement teams and supply chain planners will not forget. Geopolitical shocks, tariff volatility and route disruptions have repeatedly redrawn supply chain maps, often overnight.

UNCTAD has warned of an "exceptionally daunting operating landscape" driven by geopolitical and climate risks, while also pointing to the renewed pressure of freight costs on trade. When volatility becomes structural rather than cyclical, the cost of negotiating "in the dark" stops being a nuisance and becomes a board level risk.

That is why transparency matters more now than at any time in recent memory. Procurement is being asked to defend freight budgets with evidence, not intuition. Manufacturers want to separate genuine market moves from sales narratives. Exporters want to know whether a surcharge is justified or simply convenient. And service reliability, once a soft metric, has become a hard constraint, because missed sailings ripple straight into inventory and working capital. Independent datasets are also reshaping how shippers evaluate reliability. Sea-Intelligence data shows global schedule reliability has been stuck around the low 50 to 55 per cent range across long stretches of 2024 and into 2025, giving shippers a clearer baseline of what to expect, but also confirming how far the industry still is from dependable "clockwork" networks. In other words, performance is no longer a matter of opinion. It is measurable, and that changes behaviour.

The freight market's black box is opening

Rate discovery has traditionally been one of shipping's most powerful levers. Two shippers on the same lane could pay wildly different prices depending on timing, negotiation power, and access to market context. Even when benchmarking existed, it was often backward looking, static, and too coarse to be useful in live negotiations. Modern platforms are changing this by aggregating live transactional data at scale and converting it into benchmarks that procurement teams can use in real time. Xeneta has positioned itself at the centre of this shift, built around a large, crowd sourced dataset designed to show what the market is actually paying, rather than what someone is quoting. On Xeneta's own description of its ocean platform, the aim is explicit: "Stop negotiating in the dark." The platform highlights that it is built on rate and performance data from a network of shippers and freight forwarders and references hundreds of millions of real time rate datapoints and extensive port pair coverage.

This matters because "market rate" in shipping has always been contested ground. In a volatile environment, the ability to validate whether a contract offer is in line with prevailing benchmarks changes negotiation dynamics. It also changes internal governance. Procurement teams gain credibility when they

Patrik Berglund,
CEO & CO-FOUNDER XENETA

This is not a nice-to-have. When uncertainty takes over, market intelligence becomes one of the few levers procurement teams have left to protect their budgets and service outcomes.

can show that a rate is above market, or that a carrier's ask reflects a genuine tightening in a specific corridor. Xeneta's CEO Patrik Berglund has repeatedly framed this as a risk management necessity, which is not a nice to have. In a press release during the pandemic disruption cycle, he captured the anxiety procurement teams were facing: "It's a worrying time for shippers." His point was not just that rates were high, but that uncertainty made decision making harder, and that intelligence became one of the few levers available to shippers trying to protect budgets and service outcomes.

Reliability is becoming a procurement metric, not a complaint

Shipping has always had service variability, but the past few years forced a shift in mindset. Reliability is no longer a carrier talking point, it is a measurable differentiator that can be embedded into tenders.

The rise of comparative dashboards, whether from independent analysts or platform integrated tools, means shippers can test a carrier's claims against performance history, trade lane behaviour, and consistency across time. Even when reliability remains disappointing, the act of measurement itself changes the conversation. A shipper can now ask not only "what rate are you offering," but "what reliability profile do you deliver on this corridor, and what is the risk premium I should associate with that."

In parallel, parts of the carrier ecosystem have started referencing independent benchmarks to build trust around performance claims. Hapag-Lloyd's quality promise documentation notes that it uses Sea-Intelligence market data to ensure comparability with other carriers, which signals how third party measurement is moving into the mainstream of commercial positioning.

Container availability is shifting from guesswork to signal

Equipment availability has long been one of the most frustrating pain points for exporters, especially in markets that rely heavily on repositioning. Traditionally, scarcity was discovered the hard way, when bookings could not be confirmed, or when pick up locations suddenly moved further inland, increasing cost and uncertainty. Data analytics does not magically create containers, but it can turn stress into a signal. By tracking rate movements, corridor tightening, and congestion driven dwell patterns, analytics tools increasingly help procurement and planning teams anticipate where availability will deteriorate. This is where transparency becomes operational, not just commercial. If a shipper can see early indicators of tightening equipment or capacity, they can adjust booking windows, diversify carrier exposure, or shift routings before the market forces their hand.

Why transparency is becoming non-negotiable now

The strategic context has changed. This is not a market where one shock happens every few years. Shippers are dealing with overlapping cycles of geopolitical risk, shifting trade policy, and capacity swings. Reuters reporting in late 2025 pointed to falling rates, weakening demand signals and tariff effects that altered contract leverage again, illustrating how quickly the pendulum swings between shipper pain and carrier pain. As Jefferies analyst Omar Nokta put it, "Rates have fallen below leading-cost operators' break-even for the first time since late 2023."

When the market oscillates this sharply, transparency becomes the stabiliser. It helps shippers avoid overpaying when the market softens, and avoid under contracting risk when the market tightens. It also encourages more disciplined conversations about surcharges, index linked mechanisms, and risk sharing models because the underlying benchmarks are visible. Platforms are also increasingly integrating directly into sourcing workflows. For example, Archlet's January 2026 announcement around integrating Xeneta benchmarks into RFQ processes reflects how market data is moving from a separate intelligence function into the core of procurement execution.

That is why transparency matters more now than at any time in recent memory. Procurement is being asked to defend freight budgets with evidence, not intuition. Manufacturers want to separate genuine market moves from sales narratives.

ATAI: Engineering the Digital Nervous System of Global Logistics

This article highlights how Gangadhar Gude transformed ATAI from a solution addressing truck congestion at an Indian port to a platform tackling bottlenecks across 200 sites worldwide. ATAI isn't merely a gate automation provider it is a one stop solution for complex multidimensional port-related problems.

-By Ramprasad Ravi

At the intersection of artificial intelligence, computer vision, and operational technology stands ATAI, a company that has evolved from solving truck congestion at an Indian port to deploying AI driven automation across nearly 200 sites worldwide. Its founder, Gangadhar Gude, did not begin with a global blueprint but with a single critical bottleneck. The story began in late 2019 at Krishnapatnam Port. Chronic truck queues at the gates were slowing cargo movement.Damage claims were on the rise and there was increasing uncertainty about where exactly inefficiencies were occurring and where container damages were taking place. "There were significant traffic bottlenecks at the truck gates. There was limited visibility as to whether damages were occuring on the vessel, inside the yard, or at the gate. At the same time, there was a clear need to process trucks faster. This became the foundation of what we set out to build and the problem we wanted to solve," recalls Gangadhar. Within months, ATAI had built AI and computer vision models that could automatically read container numbers, detect structural damages, capture truck turnaround times and create an auditable digital trail of movements.

Cameras became intelligent sensors. The gate became a data capture point. The yard became measurable. What began as a single site deployment soon expanded into a pilot project with Container Corporation of India. For CONCOR, which operates a vast network of inland container depots and rail linked terminals across India, the challenge was scale and standardisation. Manual inspections, inconsistent data entry, and documentation gaps created variability inoperations. ATAI's pilot focused on auto-mating container identification and damage assessment at entry and exit points. The objective was not only speed but uniformity. By capturing ground truth data through computer vision, CONCOR gained greater transparency across terminal operations. The pilot demonstrated that AI driven inspection could significantly reduce manual interven-tion, improve accuracy, and strengthen claim management processes. Encouraged by do-mestic traction, ATAI began exploring inter-national markets. European ports presented a different set of expectations. Regulatory framworks were stringent, data protection frameworks were more rigorous and integration with legacy terminal operating systems was complex. Yet the operational challenges were similar.

Con-gestion, damage disputes and visibility gaps were universal. Execution at select European port facilities required ATAI to refine its tech-nology to handle varied lighting conditions, container standards and high automation environments. The systems were integrated with existing yard management and terminal operating platforms, enabling seamless data flow rather than parallel dashboards. The European deployments validated ATAI's ability to operate in mature, compliance driven markets. It also reinforced Gangadhar's belief that operational technol-

> **The terminal effectively becomes a test bed for how legacy Indian ports can carve out cruise precincts that are operationally segregated yet physically and economically connected to the surrounding city.**
>
> **Gangadhar Gude**
> *Founder & CEO*

nam to pilots with CONCOR and execution at Euro-pean ports, ATAI's trajectory reflects a larger shift in the maritime ecosystem. Infra-structure alone is not sufficient. Intelligence layered onto infrastructure creates differen-tiation.

Gangadhar's approach remains grounded in operational reality. Start with a problem, capture real world data, build technology that integrates seamlessly and scale without losing relevance. In an era when logistics efficiency influences national competitiveness, the ability to see and respond in real time is what defines success. By building what it describes as a digital nervous system for global logistics, ATAI is not merely automating gates or inspecting Containers. It is redefining how infrastructure thinks.

What ATAI Delivers

ATAI's platform blends hardware, software, and integration into a unified "smart yard" and "smart gate" ecosystem.

- 60–70% of the solution is productised
- 30–40% is customised based on site-specific operations

Typical deployment timelines:

- CFS / ICD: 4–8 weeks
- Large terminals (India): 4–6 months

Measurable Impact

ATAI evaluates success on three KPIs:

1. **Throughput increase:** +6–15% year-on-year
2. **OPEX reduction:**
   - Highly optimised sites: 4–6%
   - Undigitized sites: up to 40%
3. **Carbon emission reduction:** 30–60% through lower idle time and optimized equipment usage

Market Opportunity

- Globally, there are **17,000 ports and terminals**
- In 2020, only about 3% had meaningful automation or digitisation.
- By 2026, this has risen to less than **6%**.
- Enormous headroom for growth.

ogy must adapt to local conditions without losing its core intelligence. "We always begin with what is actually happening on the ground. Technology should not be built in isolation. It must reflect real world conditions," he says. After gaining international exposure, ATAI further strengthened its proposition in the Indian market. The domestic logistics ecosystem was undergoing structural change. Dedicated Freight Corridors were progress-ing, multimodal logistics parks were being conceptualized and ports were investing in mechanisation and digital platforms. Yet frag-mentation across nodes continued to persist.

ATAI evolved beyond a gate automation pro-vider to become a digital nervous system for logistics infrastructure. Its solutions expanded to cover automated gate complexes, yard vis-ibility platforms, container damage analytics, rail terminal monitoring and ware-house automation interfaces. The impact of such deployments has been multi dimension-al. Truck turnaround times have been reduced through automated identification and pre clearance mechanisms. Damage disputes have declined due to timestamped visual evidence. The reliance on manual paperwork has been minimised, resulting in improved auditabil-ity and compliance. Oper-ational planning has become more predictive with historical movement data enabling trend analysis. For operators, the financial implica-tions are significant. Reduced congestion low-ers fuel consumption and emissions. Faster processing increases asset utilisation. Accurate damage detection mitigates insurance costs and and claim disputes. In high volume terminals, even marginal improvements in processing time translate into substantial productivity gains. However, the journey has not been without challenges. Resistance to change re-mains a recurring hurdle. Terminal operators often rely on established manual processes that are deeply embedded in workforce routines. Integrating AI systems with diverse terminal operating software requires technical customisation. Upfront capital expenditure can be a concern, particularly for smaller facilities. Data ownership and cybersecurity also present critical considerations, especially in cross border deployments. ATAI has had to invest significantly in compliance frame-works and secure architecture to meet global standards. Despite these barriers, the market opportuni-ty remains substantial. Global con-tainer traffic continues to grow, even as supply chains diversify. Ports are under pressure to enhance productivity without proportional land expansion.

Inland logistics nodes are expected to absorb rising domestic cargo volumes. Across these environments, visibility is no longer optional. The addressable market extends beyond container terminals. Rail freight operators, warehouse clusters, free trade zones, and even manufacturing logistics parks face similar vis-ibility gaps. As digitalisation initiatives gather momentum worldwide, the demand for embedded AI solutions is poised to accel-erate. From the truck queues at Krishnapat-

WHY BANGLADESH'S PORT CONGESTION IS NOT A BOTTLENECK - BUT A STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

Bangladesh's port congestion reflects something deeper than operational inefficiency: it is the structural strain of an economy in transition, caught between surging trade volumes and infrastructure yet to catch up.

In global shipping and logistics, port congestion is usually treated as a red flag—signalling delays, rising costs, and operational uncertainty. Bangladesh, particularly the Port of Chattogram, has long been viewed through this lens. Images of vessel queues at outer anchorage, crowded container yards, and stressed hinterland corridors have shaped perceptions that the country's ports are struggling to keep pace with trade demand.

However, this narrative no longer reflects the full strategic reality. It is, more fundamentally, a consequence of sustained trade expansion, industrial growth, and the country's transition into a new phase of maritime and logistics development. In this sense, congestion represents a strategic inflection point—one that offers opportunity rather than deterrence for shipping lines, terminal operators, and logistics investors.

Record Throughput Signals Economic Acceleration

Bangladesh has recorded one of the strongest growth trajectories in Asia over the past decade, driven by export-led industrialisation and a rapidly expanding domestic market. While ready-made garments continue to account for over 80 per cent of export earnings, growth is increasingly diversified across home textiles, leather products, light engineering, pharmaceuticals, and electronics assembly.

This industrial momentum is directly reflected in port performance. In 2025, Chattogram Port handled its highest-ever container throughput—approximately 3.41 million TEUs—alongside cargo volumes exceeding 138 million metric tonnes. Vessel calls also reached historic highs, confirming Bangladesh's growing integration into global liner networks. These figures demonstrate that congestion is emerging not from declining efficiency, but from demand consistently outpacing legacy capacity.

Congestion as a Transitional Challenge, not a Structural Failure

This does not suggest that congestion is inconsequential. Berth waiting times, yard occupancy pressures, and hinterland delays remain operational challenges for carriers and cargo owners. Disruptions in 2025—exacerbated by customs work stoppages and procedural bottlenecks—highlighted the fragility of existing systems under peak demand conditions. Yet these pressures are best understood as transitional constraints, not structural failures. Importantly, congestion has become the catalyst for reform, accelerating both public and private-sector responses to capacity, efficiency, and digitalisation gaps.

Infrastructure Expansion and Capacity Creation Underway

- Development of the Bay Terminal project at Chattogram, aimed at increasing berth availability and improving vessel turnaround times
- Ongoing capital dredging and navigational upgrades
- Expansion of road and rail connectivity, including the Dhaka–Chattogram expressway and new rail corridors linked to the Padma Bridge
- Growth of inland container depots (ICDs) and off-dock facilities to decongest port yards

In parallel, the Matarbari Deep Sea Port—scheduled for phased operations later this decade will mark a structural shift in Bangladesh's maritime capability by enabling direct calls by larger vessels and reducing reliance on regional transshipment hubs.

Strategic Geography in a Reconfigured Shipping Landscape

Bangladesh's port dynamics must also be viewed against a changing global shipping backdrop. Within this context, the Bay of Bengal is gaining strategic prominence, and Bangladesh occupies a central position along emerging South and Southeast Asian trade corridors. Proximity to India's eastern seaboard, growing BIMSTEC trade, and evolving Indo-Pacific logistics frameworks all reinforce Bangladesh's relevance as a regional maritime node. As shipping lines diversify rotations and seek alternative gateways, Bangladesh's stable export base provides reliable backhaul potential—an increasingly important consideration in volatile markets.

Investment Opportunities Across the Logistics Value Chain

- Terminal automation and yard optimization

Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury,
Independent Consultant, Former, Head of ICD, Kamalapur & Head of Pangaon ICT

- Predictive berth allocation and vessel traffic management systems
- Expansion of bonded warehousing, cold chain facilities, and value-added logistics
- Development of multimodal logistics parks linked to rail and inland waterways

Implications for Shipping Lines and Cargo Owners

For shipping lines, Bangladesh has long been viewed as a difficult call due to berth delays, but as network resilience becomes a priority, absolute reliability is giving way to managed predictability and diversified routing. Improved port community systems, customs digitalisation, and gate operations are gradually enhancing transparency and planning certainty. Similarly, exporters and import-dependent industries can build resilience by embedding logistics into procurement strategy, using advanced booking, pre-stowage planning, and better cargo visibility to manage risk.

Hinterland Connectivity and Human Capital

Bangladesh's push toward integrated road-rail-port corridors is therefore critical, but timely execution is essential to avoid shifting port congestion inland.
Equally important is the human and institutional dimension. Modern terminals need skilled planners, digitally literate operators, and standardised procedures aligned with global best practices. Investments in systems must be matched by investments in people.

A Strategic Reframing for the Maritime Industry

Bangladesh's port congestion should not be seen only as a constraint to avoid, but as an inflection point showing that its trade, industry, and maritime relevance have reached a new scale. For the global maritime industry, the question is who positions early to participate in the next phase of its maritime evolution.

Bangladesh's port dynamics must also be viewed against a changing global shipping backdrop. Disruptions in the Red Sea, constraints at the Panama Canal, geopolitical uncertainty, and climate-related risks are forcing carriers to reassess routing strategies and network resilience.

QAVACH: THE AI SAFETY PLATFORM BUILT FOR PORTS THAT CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT

How Quantum's closed-loop HSE system is ending the spreadsheet era in terminal safety management

-By Ramprasad Ravi

In Sanskrit, Qavach means armour. A shield. Protection invoked against forces that ordinary means cannot repel. It is a word weighted with intent — and it is precisely the right name for what Quantum has brought to port and terminal safety management. Terminal HSE has, for decades, operated through a combination of manual checklists, siloed databases, and — most ubiquitously — Microsoft Excel. The result is a system that is reactive by design: incidents are recorded after they occur, root causes are rarely traced with rigour, and the one intervention that might have prevented the incident in the first place — genuine predictive action — remains out of reach. Qavach was built to end that era entirely.

The Scale of the Problem

Container terminals are among the most complex and hazardous industrial environments in operation anywhere. The convergence of heavy machinery, dense vehicle-pedestrian interfaces, high-speed throughput pressure, and chemical exposure creates a compound risk profile that demands sophisticated, real-time safety management. What most terminals actually deploy falls far short of that standard. The picture across global terminal HSE practice is consistent and concerning. Incident reports are entered manually, often hours after the event. Risk registers are static spreadsheets — frequently unchanged since the last external audit. Root cause analysis, where it exists at all, produces a filed document rather than a dynamic process that drives change. And management visibility into the live safety status of a terminal is, in most cases, essentially zero. The consequences of this deficit are not abstract. They manifest in injury rates, regulatory exposure, reputational damage, and — increasingly — commercial disadvantage, as shipping lines, port authorities, and institutional investors scrutinise safety records as a proxy for operational quality.

What Qavach Is

Qavach is the maritime industry's first purpose-built, AI-driven, closed-loop HSE platform designed specifically for port and terminal environments. It does not merely record what has gone wrong. It actively works to ensure that it does not go wrong in the first place. The platform spans 52 integrated modules covering core safety management, quality and compliance, environmental stewardship, training, and infrastructure. It is delivered entirely via the cloud, requires no on-site hardware investment, and is deployable — from contract to live operations — in 42 days. At the architectural centre of Qavach is a mechanism that distinguishes it from every competing product in the market: the Unified Incident Number (UIN).

Every event that enters the system — a near miss, an unsafe observation, an equipment damage report, a permit request — is assigned a UIN that binds it into a continuous process chain from initial report through investigation, root cause analysis, corrective action, and preventive measure. This is not a conventional workflow. It is an AI-enabled process string that activates the moment an event is logged, cross-references past incidents with a matching profile, identifies probable root causes, and suggests corrective actions before a human investigator has read the initial report.

MyQavach: Safety in Every Worker's Pocket

The single greatest limitation of traditional terminal HSE systems is reach. A dedicated safety team of five or ten professionals cannot maintain meaningful coverage across a 24/7 terminal operation. Qavach extends the safety network to every individual on site through MyQavach — an iOS and Android application that allows any terminal worker to report observations, near misses, and incidents the moment they occur, with images, GPS location, and AI-assisted data entry. The philosophy is straightforward: eliminate the friction between witnessing a hazard and reporting it. Workers are incentivised to participate through gamification and reward mechanisms embedded in the application, transforming safety from a management obligation into a shared organisational culture.

A particularly significant innovation within MyQavach is its AI image scanning capability. When a worker uploads a photograph or video of a hazard, Qavach's AI analyses the visual content, identifies risk conditions or violations, and automatically populates the relevant incident report fields. Manual entry — historically the primary source of reporting errors and the primary reason workers avoid reporting altogether — is effectively eliminated.

Predictive Intelligence and Management Reporting

Perhaps the most consequential capability in Qavach's architecture is its predictive risk engine. The system continuously monitors all live events through the UIN engine, analyses patterns across incident types, locations, times, and frequencies, and generates alerts identifying areas of heightened risk before an incident occurs. Through 2026, this capability is being substantially extended with an advanced AI engine running continuous predictive risk assessment and mitigation recommendations. Terminals adopting Qavach today are investing not only in the platform as it stands, but in a system whose intelligence compounds over time as machine learning models train on their specific operational data. At the management layer, Qavach's reporting module draws in real time from every module across the system, generates AI-rationalised commentary and recommendations, and publishes on a configurable schedule to any stakeholder group. The HSE team is freed from the compilation burden — and from the risk of producing a report that is already partially obsolete by the time it is distributed.

The Commercial and ESG Case

The financial return from Qavach extends beyond direct cost avoidance. Terminals with demonstrably strong, data-backed HSE records gain competitive advantage in a market where shipping line procurement is paying increasing attention to safety performance. The ESG dimension is particularly significant: Qavach's integrated environment, waste management, and emissions modules allow terminals to produce the documented, auditable environmental performance data that institutional investors and ESG reporting frameworks demand. As port selection decisions increasingly factor sustainability credentials, the ability to produce this data with confidence becomes a commercial asset in its own right. Qavach's SaaS delivery model eliminates the capital expenditure that has made enterprise HSE systems inaccessible to all but the largest operators. Pricing is based on user roles, with quarterly releases included in the maintenance contract ensuring continuous improvement without the disruption of major version upgrades.

The Inflection Point

The maritime industry is at a decisive moment in its approach to terminal safety. The regulatory environment is tightening. Workforce expectations are rising. And the technology now exists to manage safety with a sophistication that was not available a decade ago. The question for terminal operators is no longer whether AI-driven safety management represents the future. It clearly does. The question is whether they lead that future — or follow it, and at what cost the delay comes. Qavach offers something no spreadsheet, manual process, or conventional software system has delivered: a genuine shield. The name, in every sense, fits.

Arjun Vikram Singh
Founder & CEO, @Quantum BSO

Arjun's journey to building Qavach began far from boardrooms and software labs. He went to sea at just 17 and became one of the youngest captains before turning 28. After the excitement of command wore off, he became deeply interested in improving systems, processes, and operational efficiency.

That curiosity led him ashore to join Norasia, an innovative container shipping line known for running a multi-million-dollar business with a lean, multinational team. At Norasia, Arjun became part of a re-engineering team and later headed the Asia Pacific region. After the company was acquired by Chile's CSAV, he moved to Chile as Group COO, where he worked on global transformation, cost management, IT systems, and strategy for India and China. During this period, he realised a striking gap: despite being a $7 trillion global industry, transport and logistics lacked world-class enterprise software players. Determined to change that, he launched his own company. The early years were difficult. He lacked capital, was not a technical founder, and wanted to build real-time web-based software before the technology ecosystem was ready.

Starting with solutions for liner shipping, freight forwarding, and business intelligence, the breakthrough came when PSA International sought a digital safety system for terminals still relying on spreadsheets.

HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS RESHAPING THE GLOBAL SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

The article highlights AI's rise in ship design: Advanced tools handle complex data, automate compliance, and speed iterations—slashing cycles while boosting accuracy, efficiency, and quality.

–By Ramprasad Ravi

A

Artificial intelligence is rapidly emerging as a transformative force in shipbuilding, redefining how vessels are designed, built, operated, and maintained. What was once viewed as an experimental technology is now becoming central to competitiveness, safety, and productivity across global shipyards. Leading shipbuilders such as HD Hyundai are embedding AI across the entire shipbuilding lifecycle.

From digital design and autonomous navigation to smart manufacturing and predictive maintenance, AI is reshaping traditional processes that have remained largely unchanged for decades. One of the most visible impacts of AI is in vessel operations and navigation. AI-powered autonomous navigation systems have already moved beyond pilot projects and into commercial deployment. These systems analyse vast volumes of real-time data including weather, traffic density, fuel consumption, and vessel performance to optimise routing and operational efficiency. Successful long-distance voyages completed using AI-based navigation have demonstrated the technology's maturity and reliability.

Denis Morais,
CEO of SSI (Ship Constructor & ShipbuildingPLM)

> I've never seen shipyards more open to investing in technology than they are right now, particularly when it comes to AI. It simplifies complex shipbuilding processes by helping shipbuilders focus more on innovation and less on chasing information.

Within shipyards, AI is driving a fundamental shift toward smart manufacturing. Digital twins are increasingly being used to create virtual replicas of vessels and shipyard processes. These models integrate real-time data from sensors and inspection systems to support more accurate structural analysis, fatigue life prediction, and maintenance planning. By identifying potential issues early, AI-driven digital twins help reduce rework, downtime, and lifecycle costs. AI is also transforming ship design. Advanced design tools can now process complex engineering datasets, automate rule compliance checks, and accelerate design cycles. This enables shipbuilders to respond more quickly to customised vessel requirements while maintaining safety and regulatory standards. The result is faster project execution with improved design accuracy.

Labour challenges in shipbuilding are further accelerating AI adoption. Robotics and AI-assisted systems are increasingly deployed for repetitive, hazardous, or high-precision tasks such as welding, inspection, and material handling. Next-generation humanoid robots are

Christopher Kastner
CEO of HII (Huntington Ingalls Industries)

We have so much data in a shipyard… to use that data to be more efficient in your planning, in your scheduling, in your engineering design, in your quality assurance, really will allow us to be much quicker in identifying issues, resolving those issues, and pivoting to new schedule iterations

being developed to operate in confined shipyard environments, improving safety while enhancing productivity. Artificial intelligence is also enhancing workforce effectiveness rather than replacing it. AI-based assistants support multilingual communication, safety procedures, inspections, and engineering problem-solving, enabling skilled workers to focus on higher-value tasks. By capturing expert knowledge and embedding it into digital systems, shipyards are preserving institutional expertise amid an ageing workforce.

In parallel, AI is playing a growing role in maritime defence and security. Autonomous and semi-autonomous unmanned surface vessels are being developed with integrated decision intelligence, allowing coordinated operations with minimal human intervention. These capabilities are expected to significantly influence future naval and security strategies.

As environmental regulations tighten and vessel complexity increases, AI is becoming indispensable for managing risk, improving safety, and meeting sustainability goals. Intelligent systems that continuously learn from operational data are enabling shipbuilders and operators to make more informed decisions throughout a vessel's lifecycle.

Dong-ju Lee
Senior Vice President, HD Korea Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering

Welding humanoids will not only boost productivity but also significantly reduce the burden on workers and greatly enhance safety. By developing robots optimized for shipyard tasks, we aim to set a new paradigm in shipbuilding automation.

GOA'S CONTAINER REVOLUTION: AN UNTAPPED GATEWAY WAITING TO BE UNLOCKED

How a sleeping port on India's western coast could transform regional trade — if only liners would call

-By Ramprasad Ravi

Tucked along India's lush Konkan coastline, Goa is celebrated worldwide for its beaches, its culture, and its laid-back charm. What it is rarely celebrated for — but perhaps should be — is its container port. A port that sits underutilised not because the cargo isn't there, but because the ships haven't been told to look.

The story of container logistics in Goa and its vast hinterland is one of hidden potential, systemic inertia, and a costly over-reliance on road transport that is simultaneously a safety hazard, an economic drain, and an environmental burden. But it is also a story of opportunity — one that forward-thinking liner operators and feeder services would do well to examine closely.

The Hidden Cargo Economy of Goa and Its Hinterland

Goa's container story cannot be told without understanding its hinterland. The state itself generates a significant and growing volume of containerised cargo — roughly 4,200 to 4,300 TEUs monthly — but the real story lies beyond its borders. The districts of Hubli, Dharwad, and Belgaum in northern Karnataka add a further 1,500 to 2,000 TEUs to the total addressable market.

Together, the catchment area represents upwards of 6,000 TEUs per month in containerised trade. The commodities are both diverse and robust. On the export side, Goa and its hinterland ship pharmaceuticals, machineries, steel, electrical and electronics, agricultural staples such as maize and rice, agro-processed goods, and finished products including pickles and food preparations. Major exporters such as Renuka Sugar and Kent are active in this space. Import flows bring in goods from China, the Far East, and Europe — machinery parts, manufactured components, and consumer goods that feed Goa's growing economy and the industrial belt of interior Karnataka.

This is not marginal cargo. These are established trade lanes, with real shippers, real forwarders, and real demand. The volume exists. What does not yet exist — or exists only intermittently — is a reliable, cost-competitive sea route to carry it.

The Road Problem: Costly, Dangerous, and Economically Wasteful

In the absence of regular container vessel calls, Goa's cargo moves overland. Trucks haul containers along the narrow, winding Goa–Mumbai highway to Nhava Sheva (JNPT) — a journey of 580 kilometres at its farthest, and rarely less than 400 kilometres even for shorter routing. It is a solution of last resort that has, through default, become the industry standard. The consequences are severe and multi-dimensional.

A Safety Crisis on Goa's Roads

The Goa–Mumbai corridor is not engineered for heavy freight. It passes through narrow village roads, mountainous terrain, and coastal stretches ill-suited to the volume of trailer traffic it now carries. In the last recorded year alone, over 300 accidents involving cargo trailers were documented on these routes. These are not statistics — they are lives disrupted, communities affected, and infrastructure degraded by a transport mode pressed well beyond its appropriate scale.

A Revenue Haemorrhage for Goa

Every container that departs Goa by road and clears customs at Mumbai represents a lost transaction for the state exchequer. GST revenues, port handling fees, customs processing charges — all accrue to Maharashtra rather than Goa. Local freight forwarders, who might otherwise build thriving businesses servicing an active port community, find themselves marginalised as bookings are overwhelmingly managed through Mumbai offices.

It is an economic irony of considerable scale: Goa's goods leave Goa, but Goa sees little of the economic benefit of their movement.

The Hinterland ICD Problem

A further compounding factor is the state of the hinterland Inland Container Depot (ICD), operated by Concord. Infrastructure at this facility is thin: a single forklift, a single reach stacker, and customs operations that function only between 10 AM and 5:30 PM on working days. For an industry

Ahmed Mohiuddin
Chairman & Managing Director, Group Delta

This is not marginal cargo. These are established trade lanes, with real shippers, real forwarders, and real demand. The volume exists. What does not yet exist — or exists only intermittently — is a reliable, cost-competitive sea route to carry it.

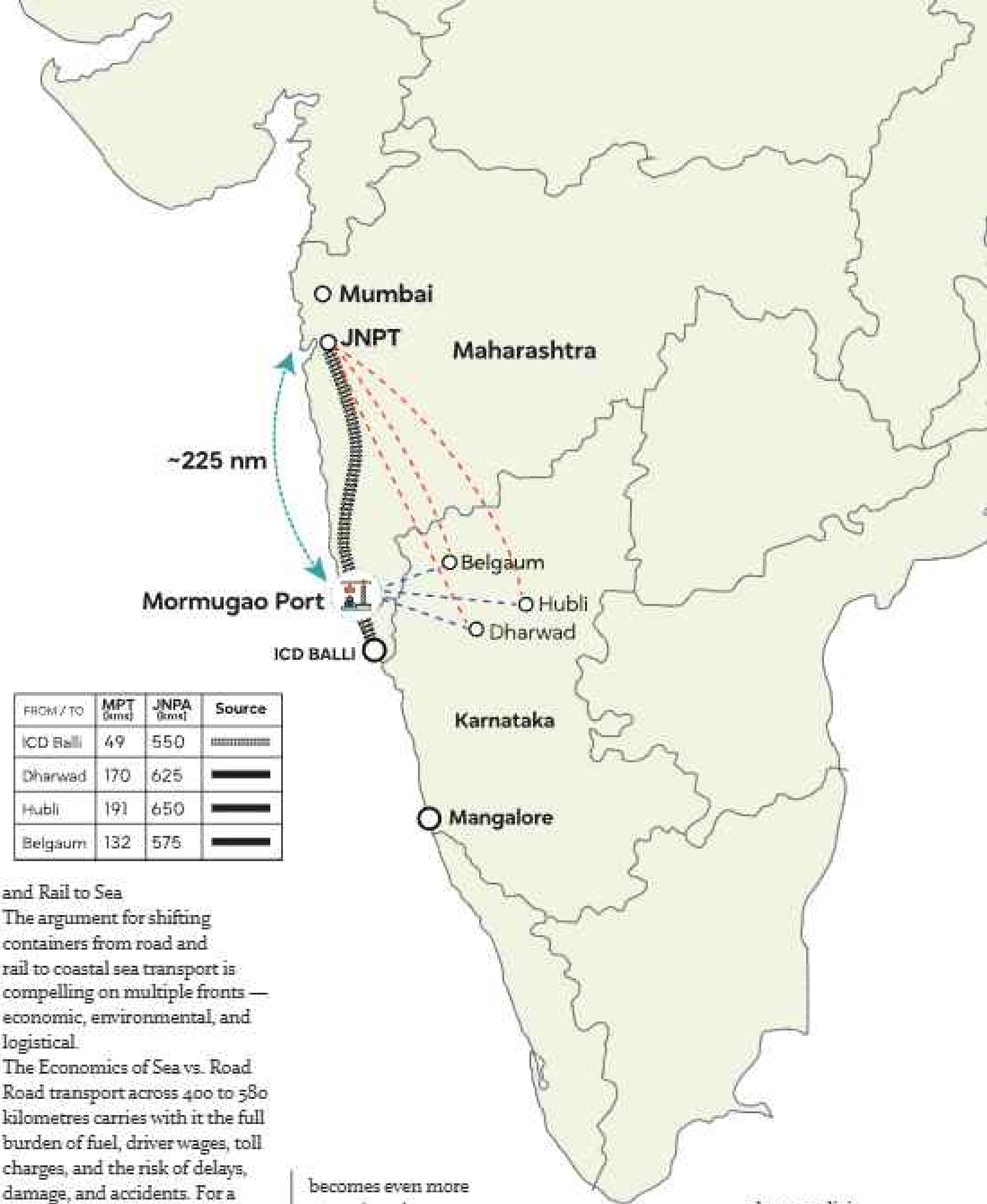
that operates around the clock, these limitations are a significant deterrent to shippers considering a sea-routed alternative. The contrast with Goa port itself — which maintains a 24/7 customs presence — is stark, and underscores the uneven development that has allowed road transport to remain dominant by default rather than merit.

Why Liners Have Stayed Away —

And Why the Logic is Flawed

Liner services and feeder operator cite a consistent reason for not calling Goa: insufficient committed volume. The data they rely upon comes primarily from ICD Bali, the dominant inland container depot in the region, whose cargo flows represent only a fraction of the true market. By that narrow measure, Goa looks like a thin opportunity.But this analysis contains a fundamental error. ICD Bali captures roughly 15% of the hinterland's container volumes. The remaining 85% moves by road and is entirely invisible to liner booking systems. Liners are, in effect, studying a photograph of only one room in a large house and concluding the house is small.

The economics of calling Goa are further complicated by the structure of coastal shipping costs. Port calls are expensive — a call at Mundra, for example, is estimated to cost a feeder in the region of $60,000. For a small-volume port, the arithmetic is unappealing unless that volume is properly understood. The risk, as operators have noted, is real. But so is the reward — if the aggregated hinterland data is brought properly into view. History adds another layer of caution. Feeder services did operate from Goa until 2018, when ageing crane infrastructure and inadequate shore facilities caused them to cease. That disruption left scars in the market's confidence. Subsequent trade gravitating to ICD Bali and Nhava Sheva has calcified into habit. Breaking that habit requires more than good intentions — it requires evidence, and a port infrastructure worthy of the opportunity.



FROM / TO	MPT (kms)	JNPA (kms)	Source
ICD Balli	49	550	
Dharwad	170	625	
Hubli	191	650	
Belgaum	132	575	

The Case for Modal Shift: Road and Rail to Sea

The argument for shifting containers from road and rail to coastal sea transport is compelling on multiple fronts — economic, environmental, and logistical.

The Economics of Sea vs. Road

Road transport across 400 to 580 kilometres carries with it the full burden of fuel, driver wages, toll charges, and the risk of delays, damage, and accidents. For a shipper in Hubli or Belgaum, routing cargo through Goa port to a coastal feeder connecting to Colombo, Singapore, or a major transshipment hub offers the prospect of reduced per-unit costs at volume, faster customs clearance through a dedicated port facility, and access to international trade lanes without the bottleneck of Mumbai.

The modal shift calculus becomes even more attractive when one considers transit time reliability. A ship operates to a schedule. A truck on the Goa–Mumbai highway does not.

Environmental and Regulatory Drivers

India's growing focus on logistics efficiency — embodied in the National Logistics Policy and the PM GatiShakti framework — places explicit emphasis on shifting freight from road to coastal and inland waterways. Coastal shipping produces significantly lower carbon emissions per tonne-kilometre than road freight. As environmental compliance becomes an increasingly prominent factor in supply chain decision-making, shippers who can demonstrate sea-routed,

6,000+
TEUs in Goa's catchment area

85%
of hinterland cargo moves by road

585km
road haul to JNPT by truck

300+
trailer accidents on Goa roads last year

lower-emission logistics will gain competitive advantage.

For international buyers in Europe and beyond, where scope-three emissions tracking is becoming a procurement standard, the ability to ship via sea rather than road represents a tangible value proposition.

Approximately 6,000 containers move monthly through Goa's catchment area. Almost none of them travel by sea.

Government Revenue and Infrastructure Investment
For the Government of Goa, the case is perhaps most straightforward. Every container that clears through Goa port rather than Nhava Sheva generates direct revenue — customs duties, port fees, GST — that remains within the state. A thriving container terminal also stimulates ancillary economic activity: warehousing, freight forwarding, customs brokerage, transport logistics for first- and last-mile delivery within Goa itself.

The safety dividend is also significant. Reducing trailer volumes on Goa's roads is not merely an economic policy choice — it is a public safety imperative, given the accident record documented above.

What the Goa Terminal Offers Today Delta Group, which secured the terminal operating contract at Goa port in April 2024, has been working to build the infrastructure and market confidence needed to attract regular liner calls. The picture that emerges is of a facility in active transition — moving from a legacy of underinvestment towards genuine operational competitiveness.
24/7 Customs Operations: Goa port maintains a round-the-clock customs presence — a significant advantage over the hinterland ICD, and an important signal to liners that operational readiness is not a constraint.

Container Scanning Infrastructure: The terminal is finalising installation of rapid scan technology, an E-scan reader, and a full container scanner. These investments will speed inspection times and reduce dwell — critical metrics for liner operators evaluating port efficiency.

Regional Connectivity: Delta Group's operational footprint — with offices in Goa, Mangalore, Vizag, and Bangalore, as well as international presence in the UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia — provides the agency and logistics backbone to support liner services from day one.

Early Mover Advantage: The first container vessel call — SCI Mumbai — was made in November 2025, running a fortnightly rotation through Goa, Kandla, and Pipava. Interest from feeder operators including Samudra, which has identified a 200–300 TEU vessel for a weekly Goa–Colombo connection, signals that appetite exists among operators willing to look at the real data.

The Ask: What Liner Operators Need to Do The call to action for liner services and operator services is not complex. It requires three things.

Look Beyond ICD Data Evaluate Goa on the basis of its total catchment volume — not just the ICD Bali figures that have historically shaped liner perception. The road-based cargo moving from Hubli, Dharwad, Belgaum, and Goa itself represents a substantial and commercially attractive opportunity that does not appear in the conventional booking data. The volume is there. It simply needs to be seen.
Commit to a Regular Service
The chicken-and-egg problem of container port development is well understood: shippers will not commit volume without a regular service, and liners will not commit a service without volume. Someone must move first. The data available from Goa's catchment area — when properly aggregated and presented — makes a credible case that a weekly or fortnightly feeder call, at the right vessel size and cost structure, can be commercially viable from the outset.

A 200 to 300 TEU vessel connecting Goa weekly to Colombo or another transshipment hub is not an act of faith. It is a commercially grounded decision, supported by the cargo base that already exists.
Engage with the Terminal and Trade Community Delta Group and its partners are actively developing a comprehensive picture of Goa's cargo flows — mapping hinterland origins and destinations, aggregating road-transport data, and building the evidence base that liners need to make informed decisions. The Vibrant Goa trade event provides a formal forum for this engagement. But the conversation can start sooner, and the data is available for operators willing to ask.

Conclusion: A Port Whose Time Has Come
Goa is not a frontier port in the sense of being undeveloped or commercially immature. It is a frontier port in the sense of standing at the edge of something significant — a moment at which the right combination of infrastructure investment, market data, and liner commitment could transform a sleeping asset into a dynamic hub for western India's coastal trade.

The cargo is there. The hinterland is there. The government interest is there. The terminal operator is there, and investing. What is missing is the ship — and the willingness of the liner community to read the opportunity whole, rather than through the narrow aperture of incomplete data.

For the shippers of Goa and Karnataka, for the road safety of Konkan communities, for the state exchequer, and for the liner operators who will find themselves well-positioned in a growing coastal trade market — the case for calling Goa is not merely reasonable.
It is overdue.

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- GOA PORT CARGO: **4,200–4,300** TEUS/MONTHLY
- HINTERLAND CARGO (HUBLI, DHARWAD, BELGAUM): **1,500–2,000** TEUS/MONTH
- TOTAL CATCHMENT: **6,000+** TEUS/MONTH
- **85%** OF HINTERLAND CARGO CURRENTLY MOVES BY ROAD
- ROAD DISTANCE TO JNPT: **400–580 KM**
- **300+** TRAILER ACCIDENTS RECORDED ON GOA ROADS LAST YEAR
- FIRST CONTAINER VESSEL CALL: **NOVEMBER 2025** (MUMBAI)
- TERMINAL OPERATOR: **GROUP DELTA** (CONTRACT AWARDED APRIL 2024)
- PROPOSED FEEDER SERVICE: **200–300 TEU** WEEKLY CALL, GOA–COLOMBO/MUNDRA/NAVA SHEVA

Logistics HR Summit & Awards 2026

25TH MARCH 2026 | AURIKA HOTEL, MUMBAI

BUILDING A SKILLED, RESILIENT WORKFORCE

INDIA'S LOGISTICS SECTOR HAS AN ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM AND IT ISN'T INFRASTRUCTURE

When Maritime Gateway convened India's first-ever Logistics HR Summit in Mumbai, the premise was deliberately contrarian. While the industry's conferences have traditionally obsessed over ports, roads, warehousing, and last-mile connectivity, this one came with a pointed question: who is going to run all of it? **Ramprasad Ravi,** *Editor-in-Chief of Maritime Gateway,* set the tone plainly. The Indian government has staked an audacious claim — to transform the country into a global logistics hub capable of handling 10 billion tonnes of cargo by 2047. The infrastructure investments are flowing. The policy ambition is real. But somewhere between the blueprints and the goal posts lies a glaring gap that almost nobody in the industry is talking about: the people.

The Numbers That Should Keep Everyone Up at Night

Ravikanth Yamarthy, *CEO of the Logistics Sector Skill Council (LSC)* — a government body under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship — brought the data, and it was stark. Today, the freight segment alone employs 95 lakh people in logistics. By 2030, the sector will need 47 lakh more. That isn't a rounding error. That is almost half the current workforce needing to be found, trained, certified, and deployed — in under six years. Yamarthy is unapologetically passionate about fixing this. "We would want someone to become a logistics professional by choice and not by chance," he said, cutting to the heart of what's wrong. Logistics in India has long been a sector people stumble into rather than aspire to — and the consequences of that perception are playing out in the skills deficit right now.

The LSC's response has been structural. They have developed government-approved qualifications, built an online platform for industry upskilling and reskilling, and encouraged companies to become training institutes themselves — with government funding available to support it. Their custodianship of CSR for logistics companies is channelled into workforce training and centres of excellence. One detail stood out as proof of concept: the LSC sent six vehicle drivers to Europe, where each earned Rs 2.5 lakhs per month. Globally competitive wages, for Indian workers trained to a globally competitive standard. The potential is not hypothetical.

Where Policy Meets Practice

G.M. Mohan Reddy, *General Manager at the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC),* laid out the institutional architecture that underpins all of this. The NSDC operates alongside 36 Sector Skill Councils that have collectively trained around 80,000 skilled trainers and offer more than 2,500 courses. Across the country, over 650 training partners span more than 750 districts — a reach that most private programmes could not replicate. Critically, the logistics sector holds a rare distinction: it became the first sector in India to integrate vocational and academic education under the National Education Policy (NEP). That alignment between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Skill Development signals that the policy architecture is, at least in principle, aligned. The harder work is execution.

The Man Behind the Machine

The Chief Guest, **Sushil Mansing Khopde, IPS,** *Additional Director General of Shipping,* offered a perspective that was simple, direct, and worth repeating: the man behind the machine is more important than the machine itself. In the maritime space, this is already institutionalised. From the moment a mariner enrolls in a Maritime Training Institute, their progress is tracked — by Recruitment and Placement Agencies (RPSL), through examinations, and at every stage of career advancement — by the Directorate General of Shipping. The lesson for logistics is obvious: tracking infrastructure, capex, and cargo volumes is not enough. The workforce needs an equally rigorous system of oversight, development, and accountability.

What the Summit Was Really About

The inaugural session made one thing clear: India's logistics ambitions are not going to be stopped by a shortage of ports or highways. They may well be stopped by a shortage of trained, motivated, professionally recognised human beings to run them.

(L to R) **Mr Ramprasad Ravi,** *Editor-in-Chief, Maritime Gateway,* **Mr Sushil Mansing Khopde, IPS,** *Additional Director General of Shipping, The Directorate General of Shipping, India,* **Mr Ravikanth Yamarthy,** *Chief Executive Officer, Logistics Sector Skill Council,* **Mr G M Mohan Reddy,** *General Manager, National Skill Development Corporation(NSDC)*

INDIA'S LOGISTICS WORKFORCE IS CLIMBING A LEAKING PYRAMID

If the inaugural session established the scale of India's logistics skills crisis, the first session — titled "Building the Workforce of Tomorrow" — got into the uncomfortable specifics. The diagnosis was clear, the prognosis was mixed, and a few hard truths were aired that rarely make it onto conference agendas.

The Supply Chain Is a Relay — and Too Many Runners Don't Know the Route

Capt Mahendra P Bhasin, *Managing Director of MSC Crewing Services and Chairman of IMarEST India,* opened with a frame that resonated through the rest of the session: the supply chain is a relay race.

Every hand-off matters. But a relay only works when every runner understands not just their leg, but the whole course.

That understanding, Bhasin argued, is missing — particularly in mid-level management. Too many people working inside the supply chain have no grasp of its commercial logic, its financial mechanics, or its place in the global economy. They execute tasks. They don't see the system.

His response was to go upstream — literally. Bhasin began collaborating with the Skill Development Ministry, the Education Ministry, and IIM Mumbai to design something the sector had never had: a rigorous, two-year executive MBA programme in logistics, supply chain, and maritime management, launched in 2024. The bet is on the next generation of professionals. "Those who control the supply chain hold the key to economic power," he said. "The next generation of corporate leaders will come from logistics, supply chain, and infrastructure." It is a big claim. But looking at the trajectory of global trade, it is hard to argue with.

The Pyramid Problem

Dr Pramod Sant, *Director General of the Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations in India,* reached for a different metaphor — and it was a sobering one. The industry's skills structure,

he said, resembles a pyramid: a wide, largely untrained base, a middle layer too thinly equipped to manage what it's been handed, and a narrow top that most people will never reach. What made his observation pointed was the implication: this is not a pipeline problem waiting to be solved with more training programmes. It is a structural problem. People at the base are underprepared. People in the middle lack the skills to move up. The gap doesn't naturally close — it compounds. Ramprasad Ravi pressed the panel on whether Indian logistics was facing a specific crisis in middle management. The short answer from the room: yes, and it's been building for a while.

The Women Problem — and the Closed-Door Problem

Two of the session's most direct voices on workforce inclusion came from **Indrani Chatterjee,** *Group Chief Human Resources Officer at Allcargo Group,* and **Taniya Roy,** *Head of HR at Parekh Group.*

Roy put numbers to what many in the room already sensed: women

make up only around 30% of the logistics workforce. At the mid-level, where operational competence exists, technical skills are markedly absent — and without a concerted effort at upskilling and reskilling, the sector is heading towards a quiet leadership crisis. The people who should be moving up, aren't ready. Chatterjee went further, and arguably landed the sharpest observation of the session.

The logistics sector, she argued, is not just closed to women — it is closed to outsiders of any kind. Organisations reflexively hire from within the sector, treating logistics experience as a prerequisite for every role. In doing so, they shut out the skills, leadership styles, and perspectives that could actually transform the industry. Her evidence was close to home: the Managing Director of Allcargo Group comes from a non-logistics background. So

(L to R) **Mr G M Mohan Reddy,** *General Manager, National Skill Development Corporation(NSDC),* **Capt Mahendra P Bhasin,** *Mg. Director, MSC Crewing Services & Chairman, IMarEST India,* **Mr Ravikanth Yamarthy,** *Chief Executive Officer, Logistics Sector Skill Council,* **Ms Taniya Roy,** *Head HR, Parekh Group,* **Mr Ramprasad Ravi,** *Editor-in-Chief, Maritime Gateway,* **Ms Indrani Chatterjee,** *Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Allcargo Group,* **Ms Ambika Singh,** *Senior Manager Marketing, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA),* **Dr Pramod Sant,** *Director General, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations In India*

do multiple senior leaders in the organisation. The company is stronger for it. The broader sector, she implied, would be too — if only it were willing to look beyond its own reflection when hiring.

Vadhvan: A Port That Plans to Skill Before It Operates

The session's most forward-looking moment came courtesy of **Ambika Singh,** *Senior Manager of Marketing at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA),* who outlined what Vadhvan Port would mean for Indian logistics.

The numbers are striking: Vadhvan is projected to rank among the top 10 ports globally, will be three times the size of JN Port, and — when operational — will surpass the combined container capacity of every other Indian port.

JNPA and the Maharashtra Maritime Board will jointly oversee it, and the first phase is expected to be operational by 2030. But what set Vadhvan apart in this conversation was something less discussed: it will be the first port in India to introduce a training and skilling programme before operations begin. The instinct to build the workforce ahead of the infrastructure — rather than scrambling for staff after the cranes are running — is a model the rest of the sector would do well to study.

The Money Is There — If Anyone Bothers to Claim It

G.M. Mohan Reddy of NSDC and Ravikanth Yamarthy of the Logistics Sector Skill Council closed the session with a reminder that often gets overlooked: the funding exists. Companies can direct their CSR budgets towards training and skilling.

Centres of excellence — funded through CSR — can double as benchmarks for the wider industry. And beyond CSR, there is approximately ₹15,000 crore available for industries to run apprenticeship programmes. The logistics sector is fully eligible.

The gap, it turns out, isn't only in skills. It is also in awareness — and in the willingness to reach for resources that are already on the table.

The Uncomfortable Conclusion

The session left one clear impression: India's logistics sector knows what its problems are. It can articulate the pyramid. It understands the gender gap. It sees the closed-door culture. It acknowledges that middle management is underprepared and that funding goes unclaimed.

What it has not yet solved is the harder challenge: turning awareness into action at scale, before the ambition of 10 billion tonnes runs headlong into a workforce that was never built to carry it.

SESSION 2

WHY INDIA'S LOGISTICS SECTOR IS STRUGGLING TO TRAIN ITS OWN PEOPLE

The afternoon session was the most candid of the day. Six senior executives sat down to discuss workplace challenges in Indian logistics — and what emerged was less a polished panel and more a collective confession. The skills gap is real, widely understood, and, as the conversation revealed, significantly self-inflicted.

Training Is Too Expensive — Until It Isn't

Haresh Lalwani, *Managing Director of Sun Logistics,* opened with the argument that most employers make when training budgets get cut: it costs too much.

He didn't dismiss the concern, but he inverted it. Unless the logistics industry develops training at scale, costs will never come down. The expense is partly a function of volume — or rather, the lack of it. It's a classic chicken-and-egg problem that the industry has used to justify inaction for years. Lalwani at least named it honestly.

Anirban R. Banerjee, *Chief Human Resources Officer at Goodrich Maritime,* located the problem further upstream. Since liberalisation,

he argued, the private sector had largely abdicated its responsibility to lead on workforce development. The industry had waited — for government, for institutions,

(L to R) **Mr Haresh Lalwani,** *Managing Director, Sun Logistics,* **Mr Ramprasad Ravi,** *Editor-in-Chief, Maritime Gateway,* **Mr Anirban R Banerjee,** *Chief Human Resources Officer, Goodrich Maritime,* **Ms Donna Fernandes,** *Head Human Resources – India, Hapag Lloyd AG,* **Ms Lucky Kulkarni,** *Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Jeena & Co,* **Mr Sanjay Tiwari,** *Chief Executive Officer, 21CC Education,* **Mr Supal Shah,** *Chief Executive Officer, Sarjak Container Lines Private Limited*

for someone else — and the gap had grown in the meantime. His prescription was blunt: form a cross-functional team, investigate the issue properly, and start. Not plan to start. Start.

The Industry-Education Disconnect

Donna Fernandes, *Head of Human Resources – India at Hapag-Lloyd AG,* brought one of the session's sharper diagnoses. India has talent and it has ambition. What it lacks is a functioning connection between the people who need skilled workers and the institutions producing them. Educators, she argued, are often unaware of what industry actually needs. Training platforms, when they do exist, are frequently imposed on learners rather than designed around them. The difference between force-feeding a curriculum and customising it for relevance is the difference between compliance and genuine learning. And trainees who are not motivated don't retain skills — they clock hours.

Her broader point: before the industry invests in any training infrastructure, it needs to ask whether the content is fit for purpose, whether the learner wants to be there, and whether the platform connects to a real long-term business strategy. Building a training programme without answering those questions first is expensive theatre.

The Problem Nobody Wants to Admit: There's No Time

Lucky Kulkarni, *Group Chief Human Resources Officer at Jeena & Company,* added a dimension that is rarely said aloud: even when companies allocate training budgets, the people selected for training often cannot attend. Not because they don't want to. Because the logistics industry simply never stops. The sector operates under relentless pressure, runs on thin margins of time, and treats operational continuity as non-negotiable. Training — even compliance training, which carries genuine legal and financial risk — gets pushed to the bottom of the priority list. Day after day, quarter after quarter. **Sanjay Tiwari,** *CEO of 21CC Education,* was equally direct about who is responsible for letting this situation persist: clients. The high-pressure environment that squeezes out training time exists partly because clients have allowed it to — demanding speed and cost-efficiency without asking whether the people doing the work are properly equipped to do it. The consequences fall on the workforce. Skilled people, Tiwari noted pointedly, eventually leave for organisations that invest in them. The industry's tolerance for undertraining has a retention cost that isn't always visible until it's too late.

When the Gap Starts at the Top

Supal Shah, *CEO of Sarjak Container Lines,* took the analysis to where perhaps it belongs: the boardroom. The skills gap, he argued, is fundamentally a top-management problem. When leadership doesn't allocate adequate budgets to HR and doesn't empower HR to act, the entire downstream — recruitment, training, retention — suffers. Shah was particularly pointed on compliance. Without staff awareness of corporate governance, regulatory obligations, and the risks attached to non-compliance, the potential for serious damage — financial, legal, reputational — is significant. Training is not a cost centre. It is risk management.

The Gen Z Question

The session closed on a topic that is reshaping workplaces across every industry: how do you manage a generation that wants flexibility, rapid growth, and purpose — inside an industry built on rigid operations and long hours? The panel's answers were, unexpectedly, some of the most thoughtful of the day. Shah argued that Gen Z is not unreasonable — they simply need HR to understand their purpose and make small structural accommodations in return. What they bring to the table — technological fluency, energy, and a comfort with tools that older employees struggle with — is genuinely valuable. The exchange is fair, if management is willing to make it. Fernandes reframed the flexibility debate entirely. The question, she said, is not about hours — it is about productivity. If someone completes an eight-hour task in six hours, management should be pleased, not suspicious. The fixation on time-in-seat over output-delivered is a management failure, not a Gen Z problem. She added that young workers need to see the bigger picture — not to be managed, but to understand why their actions have consequences. Kulkarni agreed. Purpose, when communicated clearly, is one of the most powerful motivators available to any employer.

Show Gen Z why their work matters and the flexibility debate largely resolves itself. But the line that cut through it all belonged to Lalwani: "The first thing we need to understand is that we should learn to change, if you want them to accept us." It was perhaps the most honest thing said all afternoon — and the most applicable, not just to Gen Z, but to an industry that has been asking new talent to accept old ways for far too long.

SESSION 3

THE WORKFORCE INDIA NEEDS NEXT AND WHY THE SYSTEM ISN'T BUILDING IT

The Workforce India Needs Next — and Why the System Isn't Building It The final session of the day carried the heaviest brief: not what is wrong with logistics training today, but what the workforce of tomorrow actually needs to look like — and whether India's educational and industrial systems are remotely capable of delivering it. The panel did not offer easy comfort.

The Gap Is Not Where You Think It Is Moderator Kamal Jain, Director at Cargomen Logistics India, opened with a question that sounds simple until you try to answer it: business schools and universities are producing graduates every year, logistics companies are hiring them — so where exactly is the gap?

Dr Rakesh Singh, *Chairman of the Institute of Supply Chain and Management*, answered with a diagnosis that cut in two directions at once. The gap, he said,

exists in educational institutions and in industry — and the two are feeding each other in a cycle that nobody is quite willing to own. The pattern in industry is particularly telling. People enter logistics by default — not by design. Companies train them on the job, shaped entirely around internal systems and processes. They become competent. And then, critically, they stop learning. Having mastered the system, they conclude they have mastered the discipline. The result is rigidity: a workforce that knows how things are done in this company, in this way, and is unwilling to question whether there might be a better one. Dr Singh noted this mental barrier is especially visible in 3PL and adjacent industries. Compounding it is a structural indignity that rarely gets discussed: pay parity.

Logistics professionals are routinely paid less than their peers in finance or sales within the same organisation — not because their work is less valuable, but because the industry has never fought to establish its own professional standing. Until that changes, the sector will continue to struggle to attract and retain the calibre of talent it claims to need.

On "Manpower," Women, and Getting the Basics Right

When moderator Jain asked whether the industry needed to promote gender-specific manpower development, **Mitali Nikore**, *Founder of Nikore Associates*, gently but pointedly suggested the panel might start by retiring the word "manpower" — "personnel" or "human resources" conveying the same meaning

without the embedded assumption. It was a small moment, but it captured something important about how the industry thinks about inclusion: often sincerely, but not always carefully. Nikore is part of She Moves Logistics — a multi-organisation initiative involving Nikore Associates, the Logistics Sector Skill Council, the Udaiti Foundation, and CII. The initiative draws its inspiration from Prime Minister Modi's framing of women-led development, as distinct from women's development.

The distinction matters: one positions women as beneficiaries; the other positions them as drivers. Logistics, Nikore argued, is the ideal sector for this ambition precisely because it creates jobs across the length and breadth of the country — in tier-2 cities, in warehouses, in last-mile delivery, in ports. The opportunity to bring women into the workforce at meaningful scale is real.

She acknowledged that genuine challenges exist for women entering the sector. But she was candid about where the deeper obstacle lies: not in infrastructure or policy, but in mindset — specifically, in the tendency of women themselves to view logistics as inherently male territory. That perception, she argued, is the primary barrier, and it is one that can be changed. The industry's talent problem is severe enough that it cannot afford to treat half the available workforce as optional.

Attrition, Gig Work, and the 40% Hole

Pankaj Kalass, *Vice President of People Operations at Delhivery*, brought the ground-level reality of large-scale logistics operations into the conversation. In or-

ganisations running on gig employment models — which increasingly describes much of India's delivery and warehousing sector — attrition runs at approximately 40%.

That number deserves a moment of consideration. When four in ten workers leave within a given period, the cost of onboarding and training becomes almost impossible to recover. Training programmes that assume a stable workforce don't function in this environment. The pipeline leaks faster than it can be filled. Kalass's response was practical: embrace women workers, who represent close to 50% of the available labour pool but remain dramatically underrepresented in logistics. Addressing the gender gap is not just an equity argument — in the context of a 40% attrition crisis, it is an operational one.

The Education System Is Not Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

Dr Singh returned to what was arguably the session's most uncomfortable truth: India's

(L to R) **Mr Ramprasad Ravi**, *Editor-in-Chief, Maritime Gateway*, **Mr Kamal Jain**, *Director, Cargomen Logistics India Private Limited*, **Mr Pankaj Kalass**, *Vice President - People Operations, Delhivery*, **Ms Mitali Nikore**, *Founder, Nikore Associates*, **Dr Rakesh Singh**, *Chairman, Institute of Supply Chain and Management*

educational system is not preparing graduates for the logistics sector — or, he suggested, for most industries — in any meaningful way. Holistic education, he argued, has been largely abandoned in favour of syllabus coverage. Most institutions are teaching curricula that belong to a previous era, with little integration of contemporary industry realities, technology, or cross-functional thinking. A handful of newer universities are attempting something different. The older, more established institutions — weighed down by bureaucracy and lacking the vision to build, in his words, "people and skills for tomorrow" — are not. The pay structure for academics compounds the problem. Meagre remuneration drives talented practitioners away from teaching and towards industry, leaving educational institutions to produce graduates who have been taught by people who have never worked in the field they are preparing students to enter. His prescription was direct: practical, site-based learning modules must be integrated into business and engineering curricula — not as optional add-ons, but as structural requirements. Students need to visit warehouses, ports, and distribution centres. They need to understand what the work actually looks like before they arrive at their first job and discover that four years of classroom education has left them unprepared for day one.

A Fitting Close

The session — and the summit — ended with an awards ceremony recognising stalwarts of the logistics industry who have contributed meaningfully to skill development over the past year. It was a well-earned acknowledgement. But the cumulative weight of the day's conversations left something harder to shake. India's logistics sector is standing at an inflection point: an infrastructure build-out of historic proportions on one side, and a workforce development system that remains fragmented, underfunded, and in many ways structurally misaligned on the other.

The summit named the problems with unusual honesty. The question it leaves open is whether the naming will lead to fixing — or whether, like so many conferences before it, the insights will remain inside the room.

TRAINING ORGANISATION OUTSTANDING OF THE YEAR

"DB Skills wins for boosting road safety and employability via Skill India driver training. Certifying 150,000+ with 0+ hour programs and NSQF Level 4, it empowers underserved drivers.

Mr. Gopal Mani, *Principal Consultant, DB skills, receives the award*

APPRENTICESHIP ENGAGEMENT OF THE YEAR

Mr. Mukund Krishnamurthy, *VP & Business Head – Auto & Farm Business, receives the award*

"Mahindra Logistics Limited excels with 5,407 apprentices in logistics trades, offering hands-on supply chain training as a top 3PL—advancing India's skilling goals.

Mr. Mukund Krishnamurthy, *VP & Business Head – Auto & Farm Business* **& Dr. Pradeep Zoting,** *AVP (HR & Industrial Relations), Mahindra Logistics, receiving the award*

BEST ORGANISATION: SKILL FACILITATORS

"Sanjay Tiwari, Co-Founder & CEO, CC Education, pioneers gamified e-learning with 110+ modules, partnering NSDC and DHL to skill logistics workforce nationwide.

Mr Salim Ahmed, *Sr Project Manager, 21CC Education receiving the award on behalf of* **Mr Sanjay Tiwari,** *CEO, 21CC Education*

INDUSTRY–ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

"Indian Institute of Freight Forwarders (IIFF) shines in collaborations with IIM, IIFT for FIATA diplomas and e-learning, led by Dr. Pramod Sant—building Exim talent.

Dr Pramod Sant, *Director General FFFAI, receives the award*

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE OF THE YEAR

“

Ocean Network Express (ONE) India, led by Ms. Shilpa Sharma, wins for purpose-driven culture and talent practices, earning global employer acclaim.

Mr Abhay Gharde, *HR Department Head and*
Ms Shilpa Sharma, *Team Leader HR receiving the award*

“

J M Baxi Group, 108-year marine leader, triumphs in talent strategies across ports and logistics from 31 offices—setting workforce benchmarks.

From JM Baxi Group - **Ms Suryameet Roy,** *CHRO,*
Ms Tarana Wadhwani, *General Manager – HR,*
Mr Shrikant Manjrekar, *Corporate HR & Head Payroll Shared Services, receiving the award*

TALENT ACQUISITION COMPANY OF THE YEAR

HR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

“

Donna Fernandes, Head of HR – India, Hapag-Lloyd AG, excels in empathetic mentoring for inclusive, high-performing teams.

Ms Donna Fernandes, *Head Human Resources – India, Hapag Lloyd AG, receives the award*

“

Taniya Roy, Head HR, Parekh Group, drives talent transformation across 26 offices with + years' expertise - a Top Influencer.

Ms Taniya Roy, *Head HR, Parekh Group, receives the award*

HR LEADER OF THE YEAR

“

Indrani Chatterjee, Group CHRO, Allcargo Group, transforms HR with women-focused programs, leveraging + years for global diversity.

Ms Indrani Chatterjee, *Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Allcargo Group, receives the award*

“

Om Logistics Supply Chain (OLSCPL) clinches the award for exceptional skill facilitation and workforce empowerment in India's logistics sector. With 30+ years of expertise, it opens nationwide infrastructure for hands-on training, industrial visits, and placements—bridging academia to industry. Advancing the National Logistics Policy, OLSCPL powers India's global supply chain ambitions.

Mr Ashish Kumar – *HRD Manager West and South, Om Logistics Supply Chain, receives the award*

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