

# India Seatrade

Digital Magazine

Delivering India as a Leading Maritime Nation

June 2021 | Volume 11

## LADIES IN LOGISTICS

**Aakanksha Bhargava**

CEO, PM Relocations Pvt. Ltd.

## POINTBLANK

**Nimish Phadke**

Managing Director,  
Federation of Kutch Industries Association

## COMPANY OF THE MONTH

**Jeena & Company**

Towards success with perfection.

## GUEST COLUMN

**Capt. Ajay Kaura**

Executive Director,  
Federation of Ship Agents Association

## SPOTLIGHT

**JM Baxi Group**

## FACE OF THE MONTH

**Jakob Friis Sorensen**

Managing Director APM Terminals Pipavav



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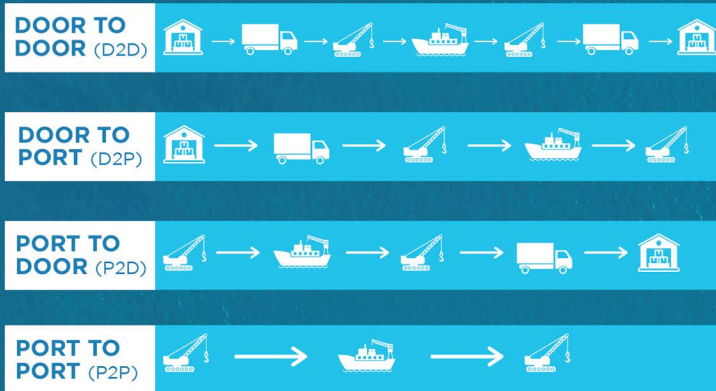


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## WORST MARITIME MISHAP CALLS FOR MUCH NEEDED REFORMS



**T**he death of 86 workers on board an accommodation barge working for the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC) in Mumbai high after being hit by Cyclone Tauktae that lashed the western region in May was most unfortunate. The loss of lives would have been much more but for the heroic efforts of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard for saving many lives.

The tragedy, one of the worst maritime accidents in India, could have been avoided if all the stakeholders had played their part required of them professionally.

While it would be premature to pin the blame on anyone for the reasons that led to the sinking of the accommodation barge 'P-305' when a government-appointed High-Level Committee (HLC) is probing the mishap, the most pertinent question that arises is: why did those in charge of running the barge not heed the weather warnings given days in advance and move to the safety of harbours?

There are far too many dimensions to the

incident that straddles both commercial and regulatory aspects which showed some glaring gaps in the system and in its operation. Media reports on the incident gives the impression that some of the basic operational safety measures were given a go by.

It is incumbent on the High-Level panel to focus on the systemic gaps that led to the loss of 86 precious lives rather than fall prey to the blame game that has already started.

The fact that many agencies are involved in the offshore oil drilling operations makes the task difficult for smooth coordination among various stakeholders. The time has come to clean up some of the out-dated practices followed to ensure that such fatal incidents do not recur.

A determined effort by the High-Level Committee in this direction would go a long way in making the offshore oil exploration industry a safe and better place to work for all concerned, particularly during a natural calamity.

**K. Mohandas** IAS (Retd)  
Chairman



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**POINT BLANK**  
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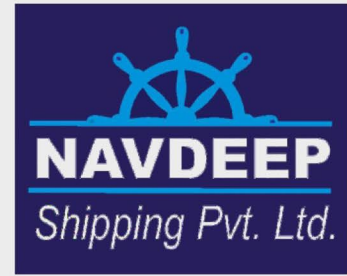
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————— **Jakob Friis Sørensen, Managing Director, APM Terminals Pipavav** —————



# DFC will be a Game Changer!

Having graduated from the 'Shipping School' of AP Moller-Maersk, Jakob brings three decades of experience working in various roles in logistics, shipping and port management.

Jakob spent most of his professional career in South Asia and South East Asia and has in-depth knowledge on the supply chains in this region. While his core expertise is organisational development and key account development, he is fluent in Danish (Norwegian, Swedish), English, German, French, Bahasa (Indonesian / Malay) and basic Japanese.

*In this feature,  
Jakob talks about managing APM Terminals Pipavav,  
its operations, volumes and way forward.*

## FACE OF THE MONTH



**How has the port grown over the last decade? What is your USP?**

**A**PM Terminals Pipavav, has many firsts to its credit. It is the first Public Private Partnership (PPP) model in the port sector in India. It had also set up first PPP with Indian Railways for rail connectivity to the port. It is the first port to commence double stack container train services in India and the first port to receive a PCC Ro-Ro vessel on the coastal run in India. The current annual cargo handling capacity includes 1.35 million TEU Containers, 250,000 Passenger cars, 2 million metric tons of Liquid bulk and 4 million metric tons of dry bulk. Strategically located at the main maritime route, the port provides access to all main shipping lines to its customers. With its excellent connectivity to the North West of hinterland through rail and road, the port connects the hinterland customers to the global markets.

Being a gateway port, the continuous improvement in our operations and services has been the backbone of our growth. The company has been investing in capital expansion and improving the infrastructure on a continuous basis. The Company started liquid cargo operations as well as Roll-on / Roll-off operations in September 2015. The Company undertook second expansion in June 2016 wherein the container yard capacity was enhanced to 1.35 million TEUs with overall expansion costing around Rs 360 crore.

In 2020, the company's Board approved Rs. 700 crore-expansion plan to enhance the cargo handling capabilities to meet the future increase in cargo volumes. Apart from raising container capacity, the Port will also be upgrading existing facilities for handling bigger ships. This expansion plan, however, is subject to extension of concession agreement by Gujarat Maritime Board.



**Tell us about the various cargo boosting activities undertaken in the last few years?**

**A**s a port, we are engaged in providing essential services and hence are operational even during pandemic. Port operations are imperative to ensure that supply chain remains uninterrupted and availability of essential supplies is maintained. Being a gateway port for containers, bulk, break bulk and liquid cargo, we aim at optimizing all the resources available to us to boost activities and efficiency at the port.

During our second phase of investment in 2015-16, the port added two rubber-tyred gantry cranes (RTGs), 1 rail-mounted gantry cranes (RMGs) and upgraded handling capabilities in one of the container berths by replacing Panamax cranes with three Post-Panamax Ship-to-Shore (STS) cranes.

A dedicated container stackyard and warehousing infrastructure provides ample storage for all types of cargo.

Strategic tie ups with three companies namely Aegis Logistics, Gulf Petrochem and IMC Ltd have enabled us to handle the import and export of liquid commodities including petroleum products, chemicals, edible oil, bitumen and LPG cargo. Few other measures that helped boost the cargo handling include: (a) optimization of cargo handling systems and equipment, (b) deploying advanced technologies to achieve enhanced efficiency in cargo handling, (c) synchronization of land side operations with seaside operations, (d) attitudinal changes amongst workforce, and (e) maintenance and management of cargo handling equipment.

One of the major initiatives that the Port has taken is automation and digitisation. Tools such as E-Form 13, facility such as 'Track & Trace', online gate pass portal, drive in container scanning and RFID container tracking service that shows real time container movement across the supply chain; are helping the Port in boosting cargo handling.

We also offer customised services like block-train loading for customers who are able to efficiently move block goods in one-go, thereby decreasing the transit cost. Since DFC is likely to be operational this financial year, rail handling facility is also upgraded. All these measures will help meeting the future cargo volumes at Pipavav Port.



**Tell us more about niche cargo handling like LPG and automobiles at Pipavav port.**

**P**ipavav Port operates a dedicated LPG terminal in collaboration with Aegis Gas Pvt. Ltd. to cater to the growing LPG market of the country. India is now world's second largest consumer of domestic LPG as Indian Government's drive (under the Pradhan Mantri UjjwalaYojna - PMUY) to provide clean cooking fuel to millions of poor families. The Port handles about 0.5 million MT of LPG imports on behalf of three major oil companies (IOCL, HPCL & BPCL).

In addition to marine and berthing facilities, the terminal comprises automated unloading arms for receipt and 12 pressurized tanks for storage of cargo. To support the inland logistics, the port has recently commissioned a port-based LPG rail siding - one of the few in the country. The rail siding allows the importers to distribute higher volumes of LPG to a larger hinterland. To further facilitate seamless evacuation, Pipavav Port will also be connected to the proposed Kandla-Gorakhpur Pipeline, which will allow the importers direct access to the high consumption hinterland of the country.

The Port is currently in the process of augmenting the berth infrastructure to handle larger vessels which will be followed by construction of additional cryogenic

storage tanks. With adequate infrastructure for imports, storage as well as evacuation, Pipavav Port is poised to play a larger role in the LPG supply chain of the country.

APM Terminals Pipavav commenced its Ro-Ro facility in August 2015 and exported more than one lakh vehicles in its first 20 months. The Port has a capacity to handle 2,50,000 vehicles annually. It is equipped with a stockyard for around 4,500 to 5,000 cars along with a Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI) facility. It is also equipped with a mobilisation yard with a capacity to accommodate approximately 500 cars on the Quay. The Port along with NYK Auto Logistics, offers the best logistic support to auto manufacturers for the export of their vehicles in western India and for coastal shipping. The Port is serviced by leading auto-liners with connectivity to important geographies of the auto world.

The global auto industry witnessed a significant slowdown during the Covid19 period which severely impacted the automobile exports from the country. Pipavav Port explored new avenues in the segment and recently commenced imports of heavy vehicles from far-east for domestic distribution. This cargo is handled through a mix of break-bulk and Ro-Ro handling wherein the vehicles are lifted off the vessel by cranes but then driven to the stockyard from the wharf on their own power, thus simplifying the handling substantially.

The auto industry also finds support in the container logistics with the introduction of 'Automotive Express', a dedicated service from Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Gurugram to APM Terminals Pipavav. The weekly service by Maersk, which supports more than 25 customers from one of the most important automotive manufacturing belts of India, was flagged off by Denmark's Ambassador to India. The Automotive Express connects the cargo to Maersk's ocean transportation services from APM Terminals Pipavav to North American as well as Far East and South East Asian markets on the MECL service for exports and FI3 and MECL services for imports.



## FACE OF THE MONTH

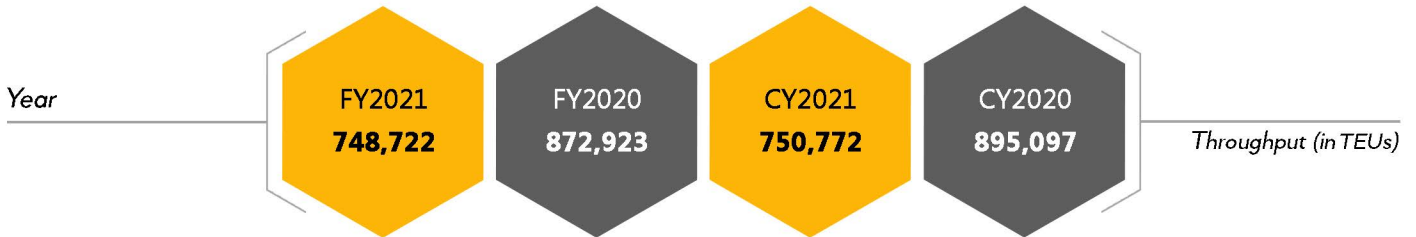


**Can you please list out the throughput figures of container and bulk cargoes for FY2020 and FY2021?**

During FY21, container volumes handled was 749,000 TEUs against 873,000 TEUs the previous year. For the year, 3.13 million MT of dry bulk was handled against 2.32 MMT last year. As for liquid cargo, 0.69 million MT was handled

during the year against 0.82 million MT in FY20. Due to pandemic and subsequent fall in demand for automobiles, the RoRo segment was severely impacted. During FY21, 11,000 units were handled as compared to 47,000 units last year. As far as container trains are concerned, the Port handled 2,111 container trains against 2,269 last year handling around 429,000 TEUs in FY21.

Following are the throughput figures for FY2020 and FY2021



**What kind of growth are you expecting for Pipavav post the commissioning of dedicated freight corridor?**

The commissioning of the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) will be a game changer for the Indian logistics industry. There will be a significant reduction in overall logistics cost with DFC as most of the cargo will move to railways once DFC is implemented. It will provide safe, reliable, flexible, economic, and environment-friendly freight transport system lowering operating cost by around 40% and reducing transit time from an average of 60 hours to 24 hours. DFC will enable running of heavy and long-haul trains at higher speeds, saving around 457 million tonnes of CO2 emission over 30 years period.

With commissioning of DFC, we expect overall cargo volume to grow and APM Terminals Pipavav will be benefitted as we are one of the few ports with necessary infrastructure in place to operate double stack trains from Port to hinterlands in north-western markets. According to DFCIL, the total traffic on western DFC is expected to grow from 113,373 million NTKM (Net Tonne Kilometre) in 2016-17 to 302,544 million NTKM in 2036-37.



**You have lined up expansion plans to the tune of Rs.700 crore. Tell us more about the status of those plans?**

We aim to utilise the invested amount for upgrading the port's existing facility; to handle bigger ships and eventually expand the container capacity to 1.6 million TEUs. We await to hear from Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) about



the concession agreement extension. Post clarity, we will continue with our INR 7bn capex plan.

We aim to strengthen our network and enhance our services extended to all our stakeholders. The container yard capacity will be expanded once the cargo growth is visible post commissioning of DFC. Our plan also includes replacement of 3 existing cranes with 4 new cranes with a wider outreach and progressive increase in Container Yard capacity to 1.6 Mn TEUs. It also includes purchase of two-yard cranes. It does not include capital dredging of berthing basin or extension of quay wall. As mentioned earlier, the expansion plan is subject to extension of concession agreement by Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) for which we are already in discussion with them.



**What are your expectations of cargo volumes for 2021? Will there be any tariff adjustments in this year?**

We believe there will be various factors that will impact the cargo volumes in 2021. Unlike last year, the first quarter of April-June has not seen major impact in cargo traffic, despite rise in coronavirus cases and restrictions by states on movement of goods. However, it is difficult to predict the trend in cases, though there are expectations that by the end of the first quarter, we will have far lower cases, which may boost the volume growth. During FY21, the cargo volume fell by around 5% for major ports to 672 million tonnes according to Indian Ports Association. However, the fall is much larger for other ports. We believe the cargo volumes are likely to remain between FY20 and FY21 levels for all ports combined.

As far as tariff adjustments is concerned, we revised our tariff recently in May 2021. The tariff adjustments are done as per the trend in industry.



**What are the port's initiatives towards sustainability, CSR and Safety? Are there any running CSR programs followed?**

APM Terminals Pipavav expects to reduce GHG emissions through effective electrification processes and efficient use of technology in parallel to investments in renewable energy sources. As a part of HSSE (Health, Safety, Security & Environment) policy, the Port has undertaken number of initiatives such as safe disposal of bio-medical waste, reusing treated waste water and plantation of more than 2.5 lakh trees excluding the mangroves plantation in over 500 hectares. Apart from this, rainwater harvesting with total capacity of 10.5 million litres and 100% wastewater recycling are some of the other measures that we have undertaken for sustainable business operations.

APM Terminals Pipavav is committed to the local communities around the port and actively driving social initiatives in education, sanitation and health, women empowerment, skill development, and infrastructure development. Over the years, the port has helped to improve the livelihoods of local villagers and has been a major catalyst in the lives of the community living in and around the port. This is in line with the organization's vision of uplifting communities around us. Recently, to fight Covid, we also rendered services to the communities around the port. The objective of this initiative is to facilitate the transportation of the Covid relief material at the earliest to ensure it reaches to the community on time to save precious lives. Understanding the necessity of nursing professionals serving as a backbone of medical system in fighting Covid Pandemic, we further channelized and facilitated more than 70 nursing staff for several hospitals

around the port, with CovidCare facility since March 2021. Additionally, we extended life support ambulance to be used by the surrounding villagers in case of emergency. In congruence of maintaining social distancing, the port facilitated an isolation centre at Vrundavan Bag, Rampara Village with residence, food and medicinal facility. Furthermore, we are promptly supporting the district administration with medical supplies on a continual basis.

Safety is at the core of all operations at APM Terminals Pipavav. The Port recently set a new benchmark in safety with the completion of 801 days of safe operations with zero fatality and Lost Time Incidents (LTI) as on 31st March 2021. This is the result of constant care, continuous training, monitoring, and supervising the operations at all levels at Pipavav. The Port has embarked on a Fatal 5 initiative to ensure maximum safety with concerted efforts in five identified areas: Transportation, Suspended Loads & Lifting, Working at Height, Stored Energy, and Control of Contractors.



**What practices are followed at the port to ensure minimum carbon footprint?**

We had taken a leap towards sustainability with 'Gujarat Green Gateway' initiatives. These initiatives are aimed at addressing the challenges of conserving the environment as well as utilising resources in optimum way through the philosophy of 'reduce, reuse and recycle'. These sustainability initiatives under the project 'Gujarat Green Gateway' are undertaken to reduce the carbon footprint, while improving livelihood of employees & workers as well as surrounding community at the Port.



## FACE OF THE MONTH

Under this project, we plan to install roof top solar power panels inside the port premises and replace conventional high-power lights with LED lights in cargo handling equipment. The solar power plant would compensate part power requirements across the port. This project will help the Port in reducing carbon footprint to the tune of 200 MT per year while 'LED lights on equipment' project will reduce carbon emissions by around 50 MT per year. Other initiatives such as rubber-tyred gantry cranes (RTGs) electrification, oil recycling, and deployment of eCars and LED lights in Port's operational and utility areas have already been completed under this programme.

### What has been impact on port operations due to Cyclone 'Tauktae'?

Port of Pipavav experienced an unprecedented crisis in mid-May when Cyclone Tauktae hit the Gujarat coast, ravaging everything that came in its way. The cyclone had impacted our port adversely and had halted our operations temporarily. Despite badly hit by the cyclone, I am glad to inform you that there was no loss of life at the Port. Our proactive preparations ensured that we had minimal impact and all our employees remained safe during and after the cyclone.

Though the key infrastructure of the Port was intact, the

power & communication network were severely impacted. To ensure that customers are not impacted, the Port immediately arranged for the mobile power source to commence the operations at the earliest. Relentless efforts by the teams on ground and teams supporting remotely resulted in setting up the mobile power source while taking utmost precautions in terms of safety of people and equipment. On the landside operations, rail container operations were resumed from May 22 followed by fertilizer rake loading from May 25 onwards. Partial non-container operations resumed from May 26 and dry cargo vessels started from May 29 onwards. The gate operations for export and import of dry containers resumed in a controlled manner while live reefer is permitted without any restrictions. We resumed container operations on 1st June 2021, with the berthing of Transworld Group's- SSL Brahmaputra. Although operations have resumed, the Port is still not on the public utility power grid (GETCO) and is expected to recover steadily over the coming weeks. Repairs are being done in anticipation of the monsoon season and complete port recovery will take up to 3 months.

We are making every possible effort to ensure that our customers have least impact on their operations. We are grateful to our customers and stakeholders for their continued cooperation and patience. We are now geared up to welcome vessels, trains, and trucks at our port with full enthusiasm. 🚚



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**Sabyasachi Hajara**  
Ex-CMD, Shipping Corporation of India.

“ Is privatization  
of Shipping  
Corporation of India  
Necessary ”



At the outset, I thank *India Seatrade* for this opportunity to share my thoughts on the topic "Privatization of the Shipping Corporation of India - Is it Necessary".

There is a perpetual debate in India, and in other countries, on the pros and cons of privatization of public sector assets. The supporters of this policy strongly claim that Governments have no business to be in business and their role should be confined to facilitating and regulating business.

The detractors of this policy claim that this is akin to selling family jewels and should be avoided at all costs. Without getting into such rhetoric, I personally feel that professional management of a company has very little to do with who holds the shares of the company. They should run the company to the best of their abilities and in the best interest of the company and all its stakeholders, which not only include the shareholders but also the employees, the service providers, the environment and the society at large. I also feel that shareholders, be it the government or private ones, should have very minimum interference in the running of the company and this should be totally left to the professional Board and management.

I also strongly believe that the model of mixed economy has stood our national economy in good stead. But for this model, India could not have achieved the state of industrialization that it has achieved post-independence. The first Prime Minister of the country, Jawaharlal Nehru, had described the Public Sector Units as the temples of modern India. The DPE (Department of Public Enterprises) has proved time and again through their numerous studies that in terms of various financial and commercial parameters, the PSUs collectively have outperformed the private sector as a whole.

Out of some 250+ central public sector units, barely 30 or so incur loss and quite a few of such loss-making units were originally private sector companies that were nationalized at various stages to avoid their closures resulting in the employees summarily losing their jobs. In terms of ROI/ ROCE and dividends per capital employed, PSUs have always been ahead of their private sector counterparts.

One of the biggest contributions of PSUs is bringing true professionalism in Indian industry through their efforts in HRD, which have been many fold compared to the private sector. The evidence is there for all to see – in banking: SBI; E&P: ONGC; refining: IOC; power generation: NTPC; equipment: BHEL; and shipping: SCI. All these PSUs have supplied professionals to their private sector counterparts and these professionals have occupied topmost positions under the promoters in their respective companies.

Let me now focus on SCI and the shipping sector. Firstly, I believe that shipping is a strategic industry. I recall that long back when there was some talk of undersea pipeline for gas between India and Qatar, the ministry of petroleum

and natural gas (MOPNG) declared that this is a strategic project on which GOI must have direct control through PSUs like ONGC and IOC. Shipping is nothing but a floating pipeline for a country and hence is a national strategic asset.

GOI was thinking of improving the country's energy security by having a stake in Indian overseas oil and gas projects. But without having control on the means to transport such oil and gas, (i.e., shipping), these attempts can never improve energy security.

While talking of energy security, let me also recall the days of the years-long Iran-Iraq war or the Gulf war. Before the outbreak of such wars, the country's national fleet used to carry something like more than 60% of imports of crude and products.

During the war, the national fleet, and primarily SCI tankers carried 98% to 99% of crude and product imports as foreign tanker owners simply refused to call at the war/strife ridden area. An SCI tanker was even hit by missiles and to boost the morale of the seafarers, the then CMD of SCI even sailed with a tanker to the Gulf. I dare say, I can't imagine a private sector owner or chief emulating his footsteps.

"It's thus no exaggeration to say that during crucial times it was SCI that provided a lifeline to the Indian economy by maintaining the smooth flow of crude and products into the country."

Just to emphasize the point, nearly 80% of our crude requirements are met through imports.

Another very important aspect for our country is its maritime security. The 26/11 incident in Mumbai proved conclusively that there are few countries in the world as India in terms of maritime security. I recall not one but several naval chiefs iterating that the best way to improve the country's maritime security is by reducing the presence of foreign tonnage in Indian coasts as foreign ships have a large number of foreign nationals on board whereas Indian ships are fully manned by Indian crew.

To have control on tonnage, particularly in times of emergencies, USA maintains a core fleet and this concept is known as SeaLift Command. Besides, the USA has control on an even bigger fleet through their Jones Act. China has total control on their entire tonnage. I think in terms of vastness, i.e., in the context of population, size and economy, India can be only compared to China and USA and thus should follow their policy of having control on a core fleet to meet the emergencies. It can be argued that India has such provision under MSA (Merchant Shipping Act), whereby any Indian flag ship can be requisitioned in times of emergency. But this is more theoretical and cannot be put into practice, at least expeditiously. Thus, time and

## OPINION

again, it's SCI ships which have come to the aid of the nation in times of emergencies, including at the times when Indian citizens have had to be evacuated urgently from war/strife ridden areas.

In the context of Indian shipping, I would also like to make one more point. Today India supplies close to 9/10% of seafarers to the global fleet, though India's tonnage is only about 01% that of the global fleet. Indian seafarers are considered to be second to none in the world. I proudly acclaim that this has only been possible due to SCI and its policy of HRD for seafarers. No Indian or foreign shipowner has contributed even one tenth of SCI's contribution in this regard. Even in terms of growth of Indian tonnage, it is SCI that has contributed the most and the growth of Indian tonnage in its golden era of '60's, '70's and '80's was synonymous with growth of SCI. Even early in this Millennium, SCI's growth was the highest amongst Indian lines.

In short, I feel that privatization of SCI is not only unnecessary but also detrimental to the country's national interest. The energy security, maritime security and various other strategic aspects will be highly jeopardized through such a move.

Before concluding, I would like to comment on the current process of privatization of SCI. The government has decided to de-merge the so-called non-core assets. I don't know what's really non-core as any asset related to maritime training or even premises for undertaking business or residences for employees can't be considered as non-core in my opinion. Anyway, the demarcation of core/non-core and the due diligence will probably take quite a few months.

If we look at the three shortlisted bidders, we find that two of them, Foresight and Safe Sea, are foreign entities though driven by two Indians, Ravi Meherotra (an ex-SCI maritime engineer) and S V Anchan.

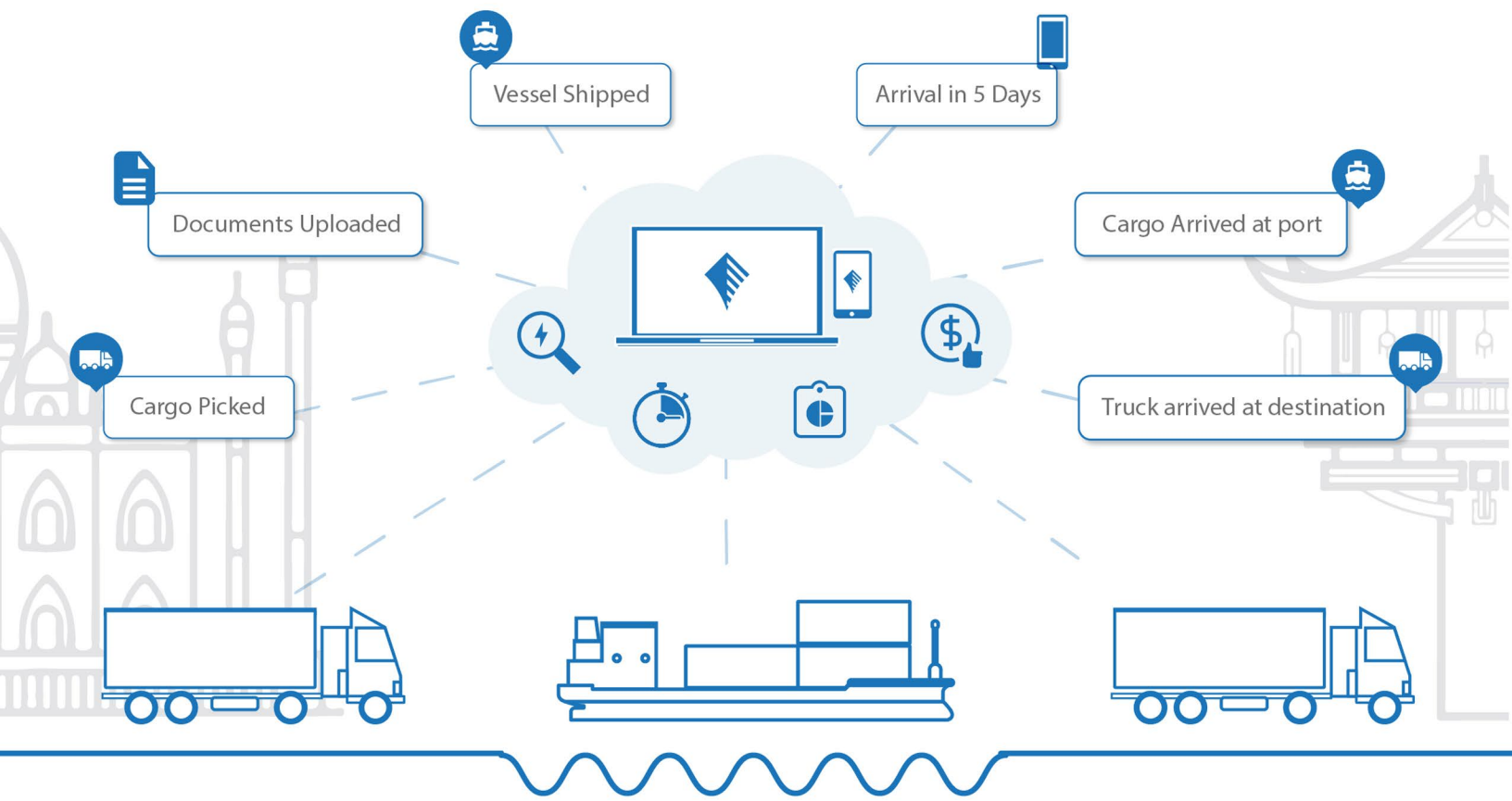
Foresight has several decades of experience in owning and operating tankers, oil rigs, and at one time container vessels and bulk carriers as well as ship management experience besides many other business interests across the globe. In a way they may be considered the forerunner amongst the three in terms of their experience.

Safe Sea has tanker owning and operating experience but are primarily into logistics. Since these are foreign entities and as per the bidding process, there is no ban on flagging the ships out of India, one wonders whether the character of the fleet will undergo a drastic change under their ownership if that were to happen.

The third bidder, Megha Engineering, is a Hyderabad - based Indian entity with no shipping experience though they are associated with Capt. Santha Kumar, an ex-SCI master mariner. If there were bidders like GESCO or a big group like Reliance, Tata, Adani, or Vedanta, it would have been better as they could have helped SCI to grow through consolidation of tonnage and by having substantial captive tonnage of their own.

I hope SCI, even if privatized, retains its character and continues as the premier national flag carrier and continues to contribute to the national economy and the national EXIM trade as it has done since its inception in 1961, and even before then as Eastern and Western Shipping. God bless SCI and Indian shipping. 🇮🇳





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# Creating a WOW experience in relocation services

**Aakanksha Bhargava**  
CEO, PM Relocations

*India Seatrade* presents **Aakanksha Bhargava**, CEO, PM Relocations as this month's face of "Ladies in Logistics". Having chosen a totally male-dominated industry right after college and at the young age of 21, **Aakanksha** made her way to the top through sweat and hard work. Her leadership style is leading by example and it is quite visible in the way she has handled her family business in the last 14 years.

*Read on...*



**Tell us about your childhood, studies and your passion in life.**

I was born in Kolkata into a business family. When I was seven years, we relocated to Delhi where I graduated from the illustrious Hindu College. I was always a people-centric person and believed in following my passion. Back then it was dancing and cultural engagement. I also was someone who took ownership and enjoyed taking responsibilities. I went on to lead three prestigious positions at the Hindu college - President of Placement Society, President of Choreography Society and the Cultural Head for the College Fest Mecca. To further my knowledge on managing business, I pursued my MBA from the renowned SP Jain School of Management (Singapore & Dubai).

I have always been passionate about people, connecting with them and helping them harness their own goals and visions in life. For me it has always been an 'Intent' driven approach which has helped me to be where I am today.



**Since when did you take over your family business of relocations? Did you face any obstacles as a woman in your early years of running the family business?**

After completing my MBA from SP Jain, I joined PMR at the age of 21. Back in those days, both the industry and businesses were male-dominated. When I initially joined the business, I was taken as the boss's daughter. However, with time and a few learnings and unlearning on the way, I ensured that both myself and PMR established ourselves with the right tone and brand story. The urge to prove myself initially was a lot stronger hence, I always focused on learning from the ground level and that made me travel a lot, meet people in different cities and know my industry. I knew if I should take PMR ahead, I needed to be a leader who has the ability to solve problems and has the depth of knowledge and respect of fraternity. Hence with all my heart and soul I got involved in building the team, culture and most importantly how we conducted ourselves to ensure we had a stable yet scalable growth for PMR. I went on to handle corporate sales, marketing, and operations among other departments.

I travelled and lived-in different parts of the country to understand the culture and pulse of the city establishing a reliable good team and efficient work process. I handpicked each of my team members and ensured that we all worked from the root level day-in and day-out.

Apart from this, a lot of our clients also did not take us seriously as I was both young and a woman. However, I have seen this outlook change over the years as the work started speaking for itself and we grew multi-fold with a lot of integrity, trust, and respect. When I started the



*Aakanksha and her family:  
Rajeev Bhargava (Father), Sumit Bawa (Husband)  
and Archana Bhargava (Mother)*

journey, PMR was not very well known, and we were operating in a highly unorganised sector and my parents probably never thought I would be keen on this business. However, with commitment and proper positioning we have ensured that PMR is a recognised name both in the industry as well as with our target audience. The industry today is very slowly transitioning into an organised sector. However, positive concrete results are still far to observe.

In my last 14 years, PMR expanded its base to 10 offices across India, including Mumbai, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru. The bottom-line grew manifold too. From a turnover of INR 3 crores in 2007 to closing around INR 70-plus crores in 2020.



**What is the current relocation market in India? How has it evolved over the years?**

The current relocation market is still very fragmented in terms of its service offering and categorisation. There have been some positive increments in the past few years, however, we still struggle to be recognized as an industry and mobility as an important function and service. 2020 has transformed the perceptions about the relocation business globally. The dynamics of the industry has been recovering after being hit with the advent of COVID-19 pandemic. Not only have the lives of people been affected during the

## LADIES IN LOGISTICS



lockdown but cross-border tension, travel restrictions around the world had led to the stagnation of business functions affecting the country. The relocation industry suffered equally as the travel and tourism industry.

However, as desperate times need desperate measures, innovation formed the essential cornerstone on which PMR grew. At PMR one of our core values focuses on innovation in business to reach out to a much larger target universe for stress-free relocations around the world or across the street. The lockdown scenario in the country encouraged our team of experts to curate personalized, safe and secure service solution for business continuity plans for various corporate across industries and supporting them with safe desktop and laptop moving solutions. Unlike other instances we also partnered with various medical organizations, NGOs and reached out to individuals to offer them with PRO-BONO services to transport medical equipment, oxygen concentrators, cylinders, machinery and other essential items during lockdown.

Our agile and resilient vision to sustain and ride on these difficult times has led PMR to stay relevant. Despite the odds, PMR emerged as a SME which grew, took care of its employees, customers and many individuals and NGOs alike and stayed functional during the last year and a half.

“Last year we closed in on Rs 71 crores and orchestrated close to 8000 moves in a year. However, due to the COVID pandemic, there has been a slump in the numbers.”



**What are the general obstacles or challenges that you face in your line of business? How do you overcome them?**

Earlier shifting a home used to be perceived as an activity which involved calling few laborers with no prior training in packing along with a trucker. All entering your home to help you move. In almost all of these cases the customer

would end up in losing their stuff or ending up with broken furniture, crockery, or their favourite things. However, there have been few organised players in the market who ensured that this changed with time.

PMR has grown in terms of not just providing world class packing and moving services but creating and positioning ourselves as a complete relocation ecosystem where all services are available under one roof. Right from immigration to home search, city orientation, school search, utility services orientation, and departure programs. PMR is spearheading the organized relocation business in India.

When I started my journey, I was fresh out of college trying to fit in, understand and accommodate to a new industry which was competitive, challenging and male dominated.

Secondly, it was very difficult to connect / collaborate and network with suppliers, partners, top clients and business associates since, as a common notion they thought about the maturity, commitment and the length and breadth to my persona. Back then I remember telling myself to stay strong and focus on what needs to be done. I had to lead by example at all levels starting from being competitive and bringing stability and growth in sales to building the brand recognition, upgrading the processes and systems with increasing work and manpower, setting up professional culture and most importantly all of this had to be done in a limited resource we had since, we were not funded.

Our kind of business is also not based on need creation but need based, hence having a strong brand recall value is essential along with regular follow ups and top-notch service at the execution level. Unlike any other industry, this industry has its fair share of struggles with employee attrition. Hence, we have been careful in hiring talent which believe in our vision and show a scope for learning and personal development.

**Q** Tell us about the competition that you face. How do you differentiate PMR from other players in the market?

**T**here are little to no entry barriers in our line of work, especially owing to the nature and price-sensitive target audience we have. Hence, it becomes even more crucial to establish the right brand positioning and voice to differentiate ourselves from other players in the market.

We are originally from a family of movers and hence, we understand the science behind people moving and the emotions they have attached with their belongings. As a complete end-to-end relocation ecosystem, we vouch for quality service offerings and are recognized as industry leader for giving a “WOW” experience to our clients.

**Q** You do both domestic and foreign relocations. So, which segment contributes more revenue and why?

**I**nternational Relocation is definitely a segment which contributes more revenue. However, with COVID-19 scenario, the dynamics changed as international relocation policies have been put on hold. Currently, there is a lot of scope in the business continuity and warehousing services.

**Q** What is the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the relocations industry in general and PMR in specific?

**W**ith the entry of COVID-19 in India, the relocation business definitely came to a standstill for over months. However, our team has always been agile and resilient in handling such situations.

COVID-19 has posed a very emotionally draining scenario for business functioning wherein our team have to enter people’s homes in high-risk conditions. Till now we have come across many situations where our customers have lost their near and dear ones amidst the moving process and their belongings had to be packed. In some scenarios the shipments arrived in India however the client had passed away and we had to undertake the responsibility of making sure that their extended family had been informed. Apart from the emotionally challenging scenarios there were many technical and logistical challenges which we faced due to state / region-wise lockdown and heightened fear around the second wave of COVID-19.

Despite the challenges, we opted to innovate and adapt to the volatile situation and assisted our clients with not only business continuity solutions but also helped with secure and safe packing, moving and warehousing needs. We had also extended our service line-up by tying up with NGOs such as the Robinhood Army and Give India to support them with logistics needs with respect to distribution of food and medical essentials such as oxygen concentrators, cylinders and other essentials. We also came together with healthcare companies to provide them with logistics assistance for transporting heavy medical machinery and essentials.

**Q** How do you think the year 2021 will play out for your business?

**W**ith the strong emphasis laid on vaccination, we strongly feel that everything will start falling into place and we will slowly see an upward curve with respect curating hassle-free relocation solutions to both corporates and customers. 🍀



all cargo



## This is an opportune time to make India a dominant logistics player

**Vaishnav Shetty**

Executive Director, ECU Worldwide.

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Ingenuity in Motion

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WORLDWIDE  
Everyday Excellence

ECU360  
SHIP WITH A CLICK

Coming from the promoter family, this Young Turk and scion of **Awashya Group** has already made waves in leading the Group company **ECU Line** through successful digital transformation process and towards business growth. He feels that there is a strong need for logistics players to invest in technology to make their supply chains resilient to external shocks.

*Read on to know more...*



**Q** As the next generation of the promoter group, how were you groomed into the business?

Growing up, I've had an immediate vantage point of both the business and the industry. I've been fortunate to witness the way in which both have evolved over the years. I've always known that if I wanted to play a key role in the business, my education and subsequent work experience would be primary factors that would shape me into becoming a valuable addition. Therefore, after graduating from Emory University with a degree in Economics, I wanted to further equip myself foundationally with advanced analytical and business skills. This was achieved with stints at key global corporations such as The Blackstone Group, OOCL and EY. This exposure provided me with deep industry knowledge across varied operational domains.

Initially when I joined the Avvashya group as part of Allcargo, I worked with diverse teams across different geographies and I found this crucial to developing an understanding of our global business. I received crucial business lessons and a hands-on understanding of the global logistics industry via close interactions with core operating teams. I had to work my way through by building projects which would make sense to the business and carve out my role through dedication and commitment.

Today, as an Executive Director of ECU Worldwide - a global leader in LCL consolidation and one of the largest NVOCCs in the ocean freight transportation industry - I am responsible for driving digitalization and overseeing the development of proprietary tech-tools like ECU360. I work closely with a talented team of industry experts to implement new technologies globally to drive customer experience.

**Q** How do you see the industry in the next few years? What are the changes that you want to see in the industry for the benefit of the customer?

Disruption has become the new normal in the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic and leveraging the potential of technology and digitalization will be central to driving growth within the logistics sector. Supply chains will need to upscale their functionalities with the integration of digital tools. Implementation of new-age technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) will play a key role in forming technologically advanced business models.

B2C logistics companies will need to adapt to contactless order fulfilment and place onus on implementation of touchless delivery processes for ensuring safety of customers. Indigenously developed tech tools like ECU360 are proving highly effective for a global clientele in offering them end-to-end cargo visibility at every stage of the shipping cycle.

ECU360, a technologically superior interface equipped with an interactive dashboard has offered customers the convenience of uninterrupted business continuity and hassle-free operations. The track and trace technology of ECU360 enables customers to plan their supply chains and book, transact and track their shipments from point of origin to destination in real time. To sum it up, leveraging the untapped potential of advanced digital tools and solutions will be pivotal to providing value-added services to customers, penetrating untapped markets and improving freight deliveries through a streamlined distribution model.

**Q** How do you describe yourself as a person?

If I were to describe myself in a nutshell, I think the first word that comes to mind is curiosity. As far back as I can remember, it's been the attribute that has driven me the most to its subsequent natural progression - learning. I've always been an open format learner, I try to spend as much time reading as possible or perusing new media publications such as Vox, The Print or The Ken. And, of course, I love exchanging ideas with others who care to share their curiosities. I'm very passionate about finding ways in which new learnings and concepts can be carried over to my work. Besides that, I'm most definitely an automobile and technology enthusiast. It's fascinating to me how these two fields are intersecting around the world right now especially in the form of new age tech-enabled vehicles from the likes of Tesla and Lucid Motors.

**Q** You are involved in the operations of ECU Line which contributes as much as 80 per cent to the revenue of Allcargo? How are you going about it and what has been the experience so far?

All cargo has always been a customer-centric and tech-focused organization. In large part thanks to a highly dedicated and dynamic team, I have been proactively involved in rolling out some of our niche customer-centric initiatives for customers of ECU Worldwide. An example of this would be the development of proprietary digital tools, such as our flagship end-to-end digital logistics platform ECU360. It's widespread adoption across key global markets such as the USA, Europe and India has been one of our stellar achievements in the recent past. About 30% of our export volume globally is now transacted via ECU360. In India, we are at around 25%, the only company to achieve such significant digital adoption.

Launched globally in 2019, ECU360 enables small and mid-level freight forwarders to attain speed and business growth through the instant quotation and real-time pricing feature of the platform. We set out to build a logistics control tower in which customers can avail of facilities like invoice generation, e-bills of lading, e-delivery orders and e-payment

## YOUTH ICON IN LOGISTICS

facilities through a robust implementation of Hyper-Converged Infrastructure (HCI) technology.

Customers are assured of comprehensive cargo visibility from point of origin to destination with the platform's multimodal operational mechanism making shipment transportation seamless across various operational touch points. We intend to transform customer service paradigms by introducing digitally advanced tech offerings to provide hassle-free cargo mobility for customers.

### How did Allcargo adapt to the pandemic?

Logistics was categorized as an essential service by the government and we were fully operational when the nationwide lockdown was announced back in March 2020. Our teams were mobilized into action by continuously monitoring and adapting to on-ground situations in order to tackle emerging contingencies. We were prepared to swiftly implement business continuity plans and core teams were engaged in daily calls to discuss critical issues. Teams were split into a hybrid protocol consisting of work-from-home as well as on-site deployment due to offices functioning with limited capacity constraints. There was an emphasis on adhering to government protocols and directives while ensuring that all our on-site personnel adhered to prescribed precautions and practiced COVID appropriate behaviour. We made sure that we were constantly communicating with our stakeholders and leveraging the use of technology through regular communication interfaces as well as through our advanced digital platform - ECU360.

### What are the lessons logistics as an industry should learn from the pandemic? What role do you foresee for India in the post-pandemic phase?

I believe that as participants in the Indian logistics industry, we have to understand the way in which the pandemic has pushed the world out of its comfort zone and disrupted the conventional practices of different businesses, logistics being no exception. On a global level and within India, logistics players will need to operate in a collaborative spirit, working alongside a greater competitive framework.

Covid-19 has also elucidated the need for logistics players to invest in making their supply chains resilient to the frequencies and magnitudes of exogenous shocks; those who invested heavily in digitalization were able to significantly insulate themselves from these aforesaid shocks. In India, fast-tracking the roll-out of the National Logistics Policy (NLP) to promote seamless movement of goods across the country will also help to a large extent. We need to make logistics costs competitive globally, as well as focus on the job creation and skill development aspect in this sector.



India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and given that today Covid-19 has disrupted the entire thought process around value chains, this is a very opportune time to reinforce our position towards becoming dominant players in the Global Value Chain (GVC). We need to establish our country as a logistics and manufacturing hub for the globe - fuelled by tech innovation and best-trade practices with government-led pro-industry interventions. 

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# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

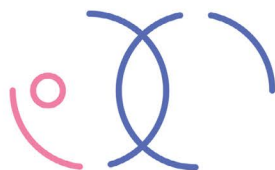
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THE SILVER LINING

HOPE IS HERE



## Stevedores are required. But to what extent... remains to be seen

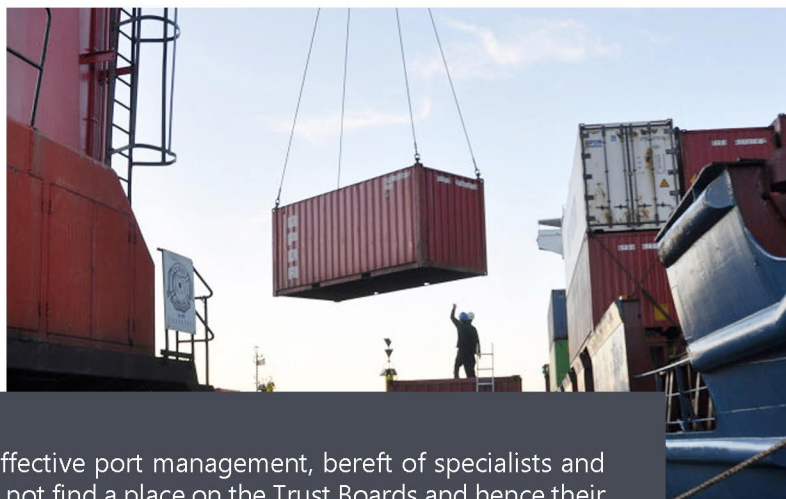
In this interview, **Ishwar Achanta**, President, Federation of Association of Stevedores (FAS) speaks about the dwindling work scope and travails that the stevedores are experiencing as a result of increased mechanisation in cargo loading and unloading in ports. He feels that stevedoring manpower need to upskilled with technological advances through skill development centres to improve productivity. He also feels that there is still scope for traditional stevedoring as certain cargoes cannot be handled through mechanisation.

**Ishwar Achanta**  
President,  
Federation of Association of Stevedores



**Stevedoring firms have been facing an existential crisis for some time now. What are the reasons for this?**

**F**ederation of Association of Stevedores (FAS) acts on behalf of the community of thousands of stevedores, in our ports engaged in this extremely difficult task of keeping the ships calling at our ports and moving cargoes without any hindrance. However, we are faced with myriad situations that are slowly but surely, whittling down the efficacy, efficiency & survivability of stevedores. A few of them are:



- »» Inefficiencies in many of our ports are caused by ineffective port management, bereft of specialists and those experienced in ports & shipping. Stevedores do not find a place on the Trust Boards and hence their voice is never heard.
- »» Outdated and antiquated policies and tariff regimes create further inefficiencies.
- »» Ports insist on charging for services which are not provided, leading to unwarranted higher tariffs and escalated last mile costs.
- »» Improper implementation of existing policies leading to higher costs.
- »» Refusal of port managements to engage with local stevedore associations to resolve issues, particularly when it is the stevedore who has marketed and brought the cargo to the port, promoted door to door logistics, bonded facilities for stock and sale, invested in cargo handling equipment & systems and established hinterland connectivity.



**How will the government's plan to privatise cargo handling berths run by the port itself under a new law governing major ports affect the fortunes of stevedores?**

**G**OI's stated and advertised policy shift to hand over Major Port assets to private companies will ensure loss of livelihood for the licensed stevedores at Major ports and leave thousands of workers jobless. and hand over our precious assets to private companies, who would have no qualms about setting tariffs to suit their commercial interests.

The policy aims at declaring present operations as inefficient and there has been much talk about "benchmarking performance of our ports with the world's best ports and develop a road map to enhance the performance to the global benchmarks".

It is a long-held view of mine that we need to benchmark on an apple-to-apple comparison. Working in our ports for 30 + years & having spent 10 years as a Trustee of two of our biggest ports, (Visakhapatnam (2004-2008) & Chennai (2009-2014)), it is my opinion that our ports are saddled

with socio-economic issues, enumerated below, like very few other countries.

- ✔ Our methods of pricing our services (an unrealistic & unacceptable normative Tariff fixation policy),
- ✔ Method of monitoring of performance & growth,
- ✔ Market access control (or the lack of it),
- ✔ Approach to environmentalü issues,
- ✔ Traffic estimations,
- ✔ Cargo handling and storage techniques,
- ✔ Importance given to intermodal connection (we are still discovering the importance of multi modal) and
- ✔ Above all, the huge impact of our labour, so dearly protected by statutes that need to be urgently revisited.

Hence, there will be a shift of substantial cargoes to these private berths and ports which will not be saddled by the issues that we face.

## INTERVIEW

It is regrettable that this situation has come to pass despite Article 21 of our Constitution which guarantees a right to livelihood, so eloquently captured by Hon. Justice, D. A. Desai in his judgement in Board of Trustees of the Port of Bombay vs. Dilipkumar Raghavendranath Nadkarni, when he held “the right to life” guaranteed by Article 21 includes “the right to livelihood”.



**Given the crisis, how can stevedores re-invent themselves to continue in business?**

**W**hen I was given this unique privilege, in July 2020, of taking over the reins of FAS from industry stalwart, Mr. K. Krishnakumar from KRN Sons, Vizag, I had said

**“It will be my job to change the way stevedores are perceived and work closely with Government, Port Managements and other stakeholders to bring back the efficiencies and economies of scale”.**

Accordingly, a strategy plan for FAS was prepared to re-invent ourselves. There are five action areas that will drive FAS:

- ➔ Assisting in governance of each Association’s activities, requiring expertise
- ➔ Guidance & information.
- ➔ Education & training, especially gender equality as we remain firmly committed to this.
- ➔ Creating and maintaining a database of all Stevedoring & Port related activities.
- ➔ Talent spotting and development support.

We are hopeful that the Vision, the key Outcome Areas, the actual Outcomes to be achieved and the Strategic Policies will drive FAS towards achieving its goals.

In response to the Hon. Minister Mansukh Mandaviya’s signing of a MOU with the Ministry of Skill Development,

FAS sent a proposal that seeks to add further value to the business of ports & shipping, in imparting training to Port workers encompassing technological advances that make productivity go hand-in-hand with human effort, knowledge and skills.

This document, resting with our Ministry for a response, is based on port-related ILO Conventions, Recommendations, Codes of Practice, Guidelines and Manuals as well as training material developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which aid in the improvement of cargo handling performance, the working conditions and practices and safety, status and welfare of women and men working in ports.

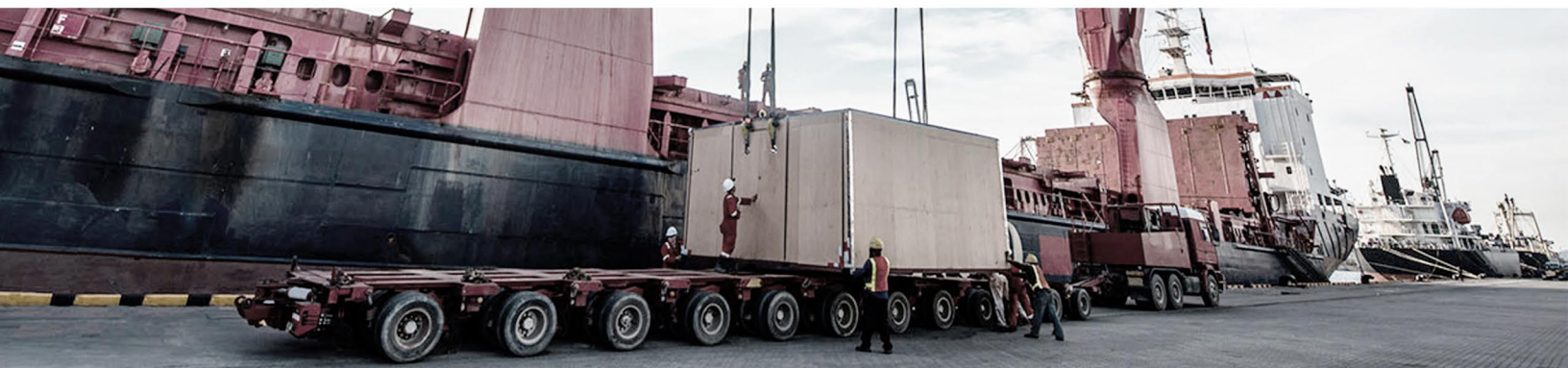
It is the intention of FAS to set up an Apex Skill Development Centre (ASDC) for imparting high-end skill training in the ports & maritime sector either on its own or by partnering with reputed organizations similar to JNPT Antwerp Port Training & Consultancy Foundation (JNPT Training Centre).

One of our goals is to promote diversity in the industry by partnering with organizations like WISTA India and Maritime SheEo in providing a platform for women in management positions in shipping and related maritime businesses. We invite all stakeholders to join our efforts in propagating skill development.



**Do you think stevedores still have a role to play due to large scale mechanisation of cargo handling activities at ports?**

**M**echanization is inevitable and I believe that India has reached a certain level of maturity in this process. The MIV 2030 exercise by the Ministry, of which I was part of, in several Working Groups, as a nominee Member of the National Shipping Board (NSB), has identified that 2.58 billion MT will be handled by 2030. Out of this 310-695 million MT will be coal, 25-30 million MT Iron Ore and 25 MMT of Cement. All these will require mechanization and current capacities will need to be augmented. The rest of cargo like Fertilizers, Steels, Mineral Ores, Granite blocks, Cobblestones, Baryte Powder, Agri products etc. will



still need stevedoring services, albeit with improved techniques, systems and skill sets of people involved.

As stevedores, we are saddened that erudite and knowledgeable people of the maritime industry including those in positions of authority, are obsessed with containers, despite being around 12% of India's EXIM volumes. We know that we will be required, even in the long run, but how much will we be allowed to function and under what terms, remains to be seen.

### Are stevedoring firms surrendering their licenses due to business setbacks and viability issues?

Indeed yes, many companies have gone out of business, including some names who have been around for several decades. It is disheartening to see that the younger generations do not want to enter this laborious (pun intended) business, leaving it to us old fogies to continue to manage.

### How has the outbreak of COVID affected the operations of stevedores?

Indeed COVID 19 has affected us badly. That our employees and Port workers are as afflicted by the virus as the rest of the country, seems to be lost on the administration. Despite this extraordinary spurt, we, the front-line, waterfront workers of the major ports in our country, remain steadfast in our duties to load and discharge the ships and keep our economy churning. Not one of the ships at our ports has suffered due to want of attention from our highly skilled workforce.

Considering the lockdowns that are being imposed across the country by different State Governments, the lockdown rules state that all ports and supply chain activities should be allowed to operate.

In as much as this statement is being made by respective Chief Secretaries, the ground reality is different. Across port cities, our workers continue to be harassed, especially when a night curfew is in effect.

We are receiving numerous requests from our employees to be allowed to return to their hometowns, fearing for their safety and that of their families. At all our port cities, hospitals are overflowing, and we are unable to predict who will turn up for work, leaving us shorthanded.

In the absence of public transportation, our members are bringing them to the workplace and dropping them back to their respective residences. In some cases, they are also providing accommodation for the staff / labour gangs along with taking care of their food requirements as well. For all this, our members are incurring additional costs.

We are also seeing an exodus of migrant labour, leading to




labour unavailability, due to which we are finding it difficult to meet the contractual obligations with the EXIM clients. Our members have begun defaulting on contracts, be it in vessel related output or yard related receipts and delivery schedules.

### Are you seeking any relief from the government to stay afloat? If yes, why?

We are distressed at the colossal loss of life due to COVID 19 and our hearts go out to all those who have lost loved ones. We remain steadfast in our support of our Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's herculean efforts to rail back this dreaded disease and we solemnly declare that, as stevedores, we will continue to man the waterfront and service the much needed, valuable trade.

We have recently made some requests for the consideration of our hon. minister, and have requested the Chairpersons & Dy. Chairmen of all our major ports to support and they are:

- Declaration that all stevedores as essential workers, meriting vaccination on priority.
- Declaration of a Force Majeure situation so that stevedores can avoid penalties from failure to adhere to contractual obligations.
- Complete moratorium of any tariff increases for the next 24 months, including those based on indexation.
- Roll back of any tariffs increased in the last 12 months.
- Reversal of detrimental policies like:
  - Berthing Policy for Dry Bulk cargo for Major ports
  - Certain provisions of Stevedoring & Shore Handling Policy
  - Amendments to the land policy which currently makes leasing land in ports prohibitive. (Detailed presentation on the issues of these policies have been made to MOPS&W)

These measures extending relief to the stevedores who are engaged in providing the essential services will ensure that the activities at the major ports remain operational during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation. 



# Delivering Generations of Excellence



**Jeena & Company** has over 120 years of experience in logistics. Their expertise in this field is backed by four generations of experience. Today, Jeena employs over 1000 professionals present in over 27 cities across India. Internationally, Jeena has an office in Melbourne, Australia and a close-knit overseas partner network. Jeena in association with Standard Coastal Shipping Pvt. Ltd., also

deals with the full stack coastal container movement. All four types of services; door to door, door to port, port to door, and port to port are offered under the coastal shipping umbrella. Our joint venture enables our clients to move their domestic cargo across 14 ports and 6 ICDs resulting in service accessibility at 4820 locations serviceable as Point of Origin or Final Point of Delivery.

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**Kale Airlines Services (I) Pvt. Ltd.**

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**Trail Blazers Tours India Pvt. Ltd.**

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**SchnelleckeJeena Logistics India Pvt. Ltd.**

This JV with Schnellecke Group AG & Co is a collaboration between the largest & oldest Indian freight forwarder and Germany's largest & most reputed automobile logistics giant which has operations all across the continent.

**Standard Coastal Shipping Pvt. Ltd.**

Is our joint domestic partner for Integrated and Multimodal Logistics services across all Major/Minor ports and ICD's across the country.



**Jeena**  
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Delivering Service Excellence

# Focus on Light-weight, high value goods

We have Hector Patel, Executive Director, Jeena & Company with us who speaks exclusively on the coastal operations of Jeena, their market and expansion plans. Expanding the reach to all corners of the country, increasing LTL consolidation and focusing on light-weight, high value goods are some of the strategies being adopted by Jeena to consolidate their position in coastal shipping.



**Hector Patel,**  
Executive Director, Jeena & Company.

**Being India's top custom broker and one of the largest forwarders, how is trade picking up post the pandemic?**

Though the first wave had a massive impact on the volumes, we were able to keep pace with our clients' requirements due to remote working, digital capabilities, and our diversification into various essential verticals. We are still in the midst of the second wave which although is more serious, our volumes have jumped up from the same quarter last year.

**In terms of trends, what do you see at the grassroots level?**

Coastal shipping was majorly affected in Q1 - FY2020-21, however, since then it has seen a steady recovery at about 80% volume growth. As the pandemic unfolded, the domestic logistics space was put to test witnessing a modal shift. Due to transit time concerns, customers using surface transport also diversified to coastal shipping.

This trend can grow as we believe that assisting customers with gap analysis on transit time and inventory management, packaged with strategic regional depot centres and last mile distribution, coastal shipping will be adopted as an alternative means of transportation.

**The government has taken a slew of initiatives to improve ease of doing business. How have these helped in promoting efficiency and reducing logistics costs?**

Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Sagarmala initiatives helped make various policy changes in 2020 such as priority coastal berthing which resulted in faster turnaround and reduced transit time, ease of generating BCG for coastal vessels. We hope that the proposal for new coastal logistics parks and automation of the clearance process at ports will be implemented thereby helping in dock stuffing/de-stuffing activities.

**What is the next strategy of Jeena-Standard Coastal to grow business in future?**

Our strategy remains to increase our business reach and also contributing to the Coastal Trade by hopefully being path breakers.

We need to increase our reach to all parts of the country and challenge our imagination on remote hinterlands too, also bring EXIM clients into the coastal fold.

We are also identifying trade lanes having potential of LTL cargo along with strategically located consolidation centres.

And finally look at increasing the commodity profile by focusing on lightweight, high value and transit sensitive commodities by considering the frequency and multiple sailings across all coastal shipping lines.

Our aim remains to partner with the final customer in reducing economies of scale.

**What are your expansion plans?**

Our expansion plan is to develop our geographical presence across 17 potential states and their industrial belts to create various commodity mixes that will allow us to increase our volume six-fold by 2025-2026.

**How do you retain your competitive edge in an industry that has too many players?**

Fortunately, with our years in the industry, we have a one-stop-shop for all kinds of logistics solutions - be it domestic or international. Cap that with our digital and automation, we aim to add value to the transaction.

**Have you adopted technology to benefit your customers as well as to improve margins?**

We have always had an in-house "Digital Solutions" team so, are no strangers to adopting, innovating and staying relevant through technology. As we are already having interface capabilities with both our clients & service providers, it has prepared us well for the next technology leaps be it Community platforms or Blockchain.

We are also looking to bring mobile-enabled offerings soon. Idea remains to focus in bringing value for business that will create Product Innovation, Quicker time to Market, faster reach and accurate tracking.

Our customers, be it Domestic or International, have access to our unified state-of-the-art customer portal for end-to-end solutions starting from order placements to various milestones with access to analytics on their consignments.

**How much volumes do you handle?**

The pandemic has shown its effect across various industries and sectors. As Jeena, we are proud to service our 30k+ Loyal Customers through these trying times.

Jeena has handled a total gross container weight of 47832387 in FY 2020 -2021, in addition to 4500 TEU which was contributed through coastal services.

As our nation suffered, Jeena moved at a rapid pace to help

## COMPANY OF THE MONTH

out in any which way we could. We handled over 3000 MT of COVID related shipments be it testing kits, Ventilators or O2 concentrators.

**Q What are the issues facing the industry which needs policy interventions from the government urgently?**

**R**eduction of Coastal VRC and CRC will further ensure competitiveness of the coastal mode in comparison to road and rail freight.

Ease of policy for container train operators to carry coastal and EXIM on same rakes will enable the trade to further target hinterland regions. Policy to provide government issued 'carbon footprint certificates' will assist CPCB's/PCC's in inviting high polluting industries identified under the central action plan by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.

There should also be changes in the interface front of the clearance process at ports, e.g. automation that would pacify the process and make it more robust.


**Q What is the customers' perception and adoption rate towards coastal?**

**C**urrently the customer's perception in the coastal trade is to move low value and less transit sensitive commodities. With the kind of vessel services and options that are catering to multiple ports with high frequency and reliability, we will foresee a change in customer perception to commodities that are of high value and even transit sensitive commodities will begin shifting to the coastal trade.

**Q What are the hindrances according to you that are restricting the growth of coastal shipping in India?**

**L**ack of popularity and awareness of the product in hinterland regions due to the mismatch of correct rail routes to coastal ports and unplanned connectivity with coastal lines. I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the 'non-availability' of defined coastal multimodal documents.

**Q Government is giving a big boost to coastal shipping as part of the Maritime India Vision 2030. How according to you can this transform the coastal mode?**

**G**overnment should create a policy to divert 5-10% of domestic cargo of PSUs, Cooperatives, Private companies to the coastal mode wherever possible and commercially viable. The need to decongest our roads and become environmentally conscious should be our collective responsibility in this decade. We should have an entity to provide Govt. issued carbon footprint certificates. There is also a need for tailored insurance policies focused towards the coastal mode. 





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In the Point Blank section, we have **Nimish Phadke**, Managing Director, Federation of Kutch Industries Association (FOKIA), speaking about the pivotal role played by the Federation in the development of the Kutch region and making it a world-class industrial hub.

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**Nimish Phadke**  
Managing Director,  
Federation of Kutch Industries Association



**What is the role played by FOKIA in industrial development of Kutch region?**

Established in 2000, FOKIA is an umbrella organization of large, medium and small industries and associations dedicated for resolving the policy related issues to increase the pace of socio-economical development of Kutch district. It is a Section-8 company incorporated under the company law and representing an investment worth INR 1,50,000/- (One Lac fifty thousand) crores from Kutch Region.

FOKIA successfully represented to then Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in year 2001, for fiscal incentive package for rehabilitation of this earthquake ravaged region. In response, the excise exemption was declared by central government. The state government also echoed the gesture and announced sales tax exemption for the upcoming unit in the region. This proved a game changer and today the scale and size of industrialisation in the district exhibits the success of this rehabilitation model.

## Highlights of Kutch Region

- 01 World's largest single location for Bentonite-based Bleaching Earth manufacturing facility
- 02 World's largest manufacturing hub of Submerged Arc Welded (SAW) pipes in terms of installed capacity
- 03 World's second largest textile plant
- 04 World's largest single-stream cement plant
- 05 Holds twelfth position in the world in total bromine production and contributes 85% of India's total production
- 06 India's first Proppants manufacturing set-up
- 07 India's largest producer of Bentonite
- 08 Produces 60% of India's total salt production for edible and industrial use
- 09 Home to India's largest sponge iron plant
- 10 India's largest manufacturer of solar photovoltaic cell & modules
- 11 Processes 50% of India's total edible oil requirement
- 12 Asia's biggest timber importer, importing 4 million MT of timberlog amounting to US\$ 1.5 billion
- 13 Installed coal-based power plant with capacity of 12000MW, solar power capacity of 155MW and wind generation of 2200MW
- 14 Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the 30,000 MW capacity hybrid renewable energy park in Kutch. It will be the largest renewable energy park of its kind in the world. It is expected to play a major role in fulfilling India's vision of generating 450 GW (4,50,000 mw) of power by 2030.



**Please tell us about some of the recent achievements of FOKIA**

**A** | FOKIA started working in close consultation with state and central government for creating strong industrial infrastructure in this earthquake ravaged region. The present road connectivity between sea ports and hinterland is of international standards. FOKIA has

successfully highlighted the importance of speeding up of long pending work of Ghaduli-Santalpur road for the upcoming largest renewable energy park of the world near Khavda.

**B** | Similarly, the work of doubling of Samkhyali-Viramgam and Samkhyali-Palanpur-Ajmer rail line and its electrification was envisaged by FOKIA for speedy, economical logistic corridor. The gauge conversion of

## POINT BLANK

Bhuj-Naliya rail line and laying of new broad gauge rail line between Naliya to Vayor (cement cluster) and extension up to Koteswar is a result of FOKIA's representation to Honourable railway ministers of different governments.

- C** | FOKIA had put lots of efforts for restoration of air connectivity at Kandla (Kutch - Gujarat). We are very happy to note that Kandla and Mundra of Kutch region have been included in the Regional Connectivity Scheme and the Kandla-Mumbai-Kandla flight services has been initiated by Spice Jet under UDAN scheme.
- D** | To add new, external water sources to the water-deficit Kutch region, FOKIA in consultation with Government of Gujarat, is setting up 100/150 MLD sea water desalination plant with a capex of INR 1,000 crore. The strengthening of existing water distribution network along the existing and upcoming industrial clusters is on the cards. FOKIA provided vital inputs to government of Gujarat for formulating first of its kind waste water recycling policy to encourage the usage of treated water for industrial use.
- E** | FOKIA is a committee member in the recently formed state level committee for monitoring National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC). Fokia addressed a letter to Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Vijaybhai Rupani, Government of Gujarat, in light to intervene in the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) launched by Government of India in view of Covid19 crisis for MSMEs and ask bankers to

provide credit support as per the ECLGS framework and refrain from insisting the credit seeker MSMEs to provide collateral/ personal guarantee on the loans.



**Tell us more about the agreement signed between FOKIA and Pennsylvania Chamber of Business for boosting trade between Kutch region and USA.**

**T**he Agreement between FOKIA and Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry prescribes necessary provisions to promote business and economic development through mutual cooperation among the two organizations. We jointly agreed to promote the following:

- 1** | The exchange of legal, economic, financial, and macroeconomic information of the respective states and countries that will lead to business opportunities between companies from the State of Gujarat, India and Pennsylvania, USA.
- 2** | The provision of information regarding trade in specific products or services, the attraction of capital investment, technology development, educational partnerships, and market research.
- 3** | The provision of access to professional services in legal, economic, commercial, and financial issues that may be of interest for companies, such as foreign trade and investment statistics, customs regulations, tax laws and contract laws.





- 4 | The promotion and coordination of (virtual) trade missions for the detection of business opportunities between companies of both states.
- 5 | The provision to business people of the necessary support for their participation in trade shows, exhibitions, and business events in both states.

**?** How does the Industrial Promotion Cell help in increasing investments into Kutch?


The primary objective of the Industrial Promotion Cell is to facilitate investors in Kutch by being the nodal agency to provide information to prospective investors about availability of resources, procedures to be followed, as well as educate investors about government policies while purchasing land for projects in Kutch.

**?** How is Covid-19 pandemic impacting the trade in Kutch region? What steps are being on behalf of FOKIA to overcome the challenges?

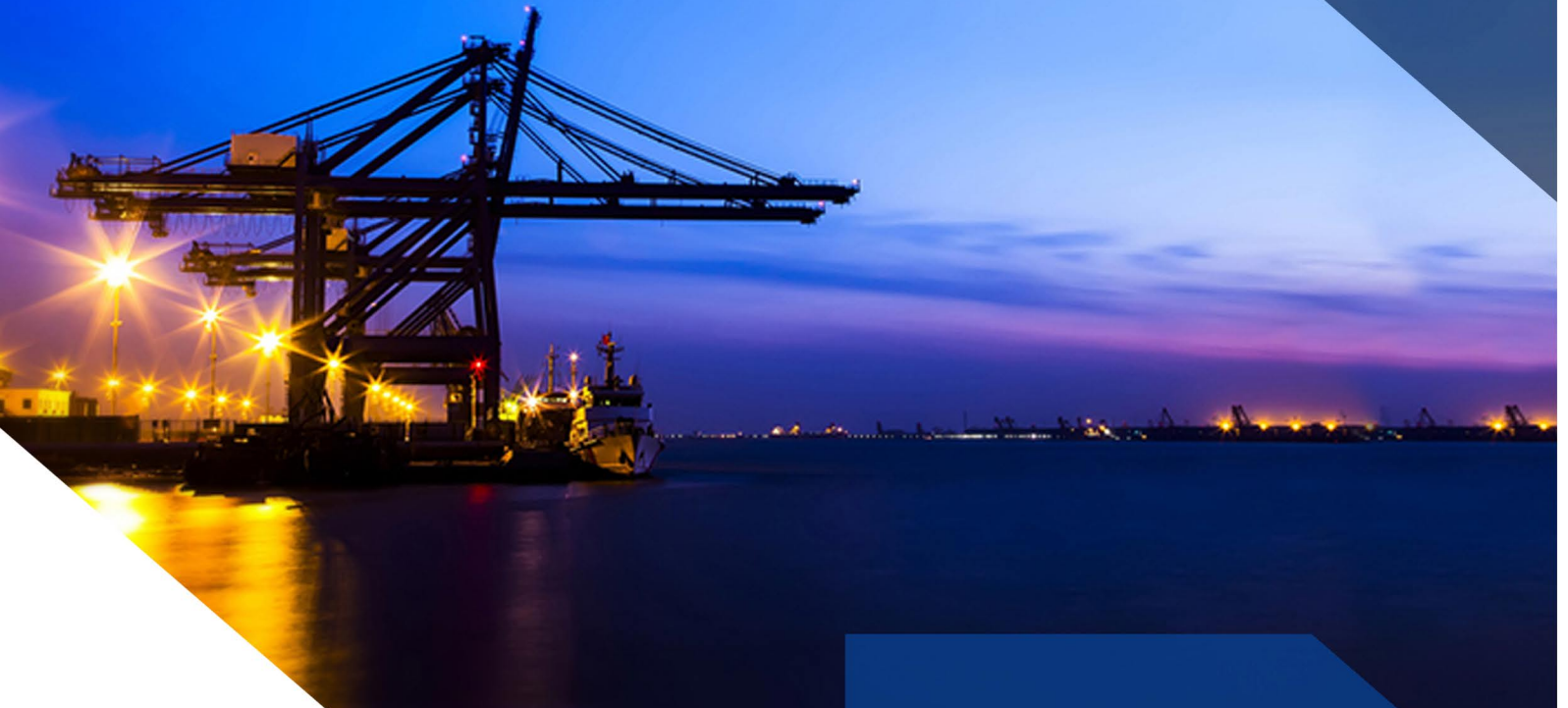
In Indian GDP total contribution of Kutch district is approx 3.55 percent of the GDP. During the first wave in March 2020, most of the industries were under lockdown and productivity of industrial units were down by 60-70%. The outflux of industrial workers from the district compounded the woes and affected the productivity further.

After the lockdown, the importance of rebooting the economy was felt by central and state governments as well as by trade bodies like FOKIA. We requested central government to unlock few segments like atomic energy, space technology, coal mining, coal gasification, aircraft maintenance & overhauling, defence etc. for private players. Under “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” many of these were announced by Hon Finance minister, GOI. We also urged central government to consider the segments like medical devices, pharmaceuticals, telecom & electronics and so on, under production linked incentive scheme (PLI).

FOKIA suggested some policy reforms and innovative suggestions to Gujarat state-appointed Hasmukh Adhiya committee. Few of the suggestions made by FOKIA were incorporated by state government while announcing new industrial policy of the state for next five years.

The revival of MSME sector is the key for rebooting the economy from the pandemic-induced slow down. The central government announced Rs. 3 lakh crores towards emergency credit guarantee line as collateral free loan to MSMEs. FOKIA was a member of the ECGS state level committee, initiated by national credit guarantee Trust Limited (NCGTL) formed for proper implementation of the scheme. FOKIA successfully ironed out few problems created by nationalised banks during the implementation of scheme, with the intervention of Reserve Bank of India. 





“

**Indian  
current port  
capacity enough  
for next ten years,  
says experts**

- **Sudheer Nambiar**

India does not need more ports/terminals for the next ten years as the combined effect of a slowing economy and the pandemic induced demand destruction clips cargo growth, says experts.

Currently, Indian ports have a capacity to handle 2,444.410 million tonnes (mt) of which the 12 major ports run by the Central government have 1,534.090mt while the non-major ports have 910.320 mt.

Another 500mt of capacity can be easily added by mechanisation, automation and digitisation, taking the total capacity to about 3,000mt.

In comparison, the capacity utilisation has been less than 50%.

The dozen major ports, which has a market share of about 54% among ports, handled a combined 672.606mt of cargo in FY21, translating into a capacity utilisation of about 44%. The major ports posted about 4% CAGR growth in overall cargo traffic over the last 5 years.

“According to international standards, port capacity should be 30% higher than cargo traffic to provide efficient services and lower the average turnaround and pre-berthing time. Major Ports’ capacity has been enhanced consistently to meet growing traffic needs, but the increase in traffic has not been proportional to the increase in capacity,” the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030, a ten-year blueprint for the country’s maritime sector prepared by the ministry of ports, shipping and waterways said.

At the same time, the Vision document said that “given the evolving global shipping market and 10-year traffic projections across commodities and regional clusters, India needs to upgrade its port infrastructure to increase its market share”.

As part of MIV 2030, major ports need to undertake 423mt capacity additions involving an investment of over Rs 33,400 crore. Out of this, approximately 95% capacity expansion is likely to be planned under Public Private Partnership (PPP)/ captive mode by the major ports, it said.

The focus of the major ports will be on brownfield expansion by privatising some of the cargo handling berths/terminals that are currently run by the port trusts themselves. This is in line with the announcement made by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech to Parliament on February 1.

Port consultants are sceptical about the need for new port projects planned by the Central government at Vadhavan in Maharashtra and the three greenfield ports proposed by the Andhra Pradesh government at Ramayapatnam, Bhavanapadu and Machilipatnam, entailing investments of thousands of crores.

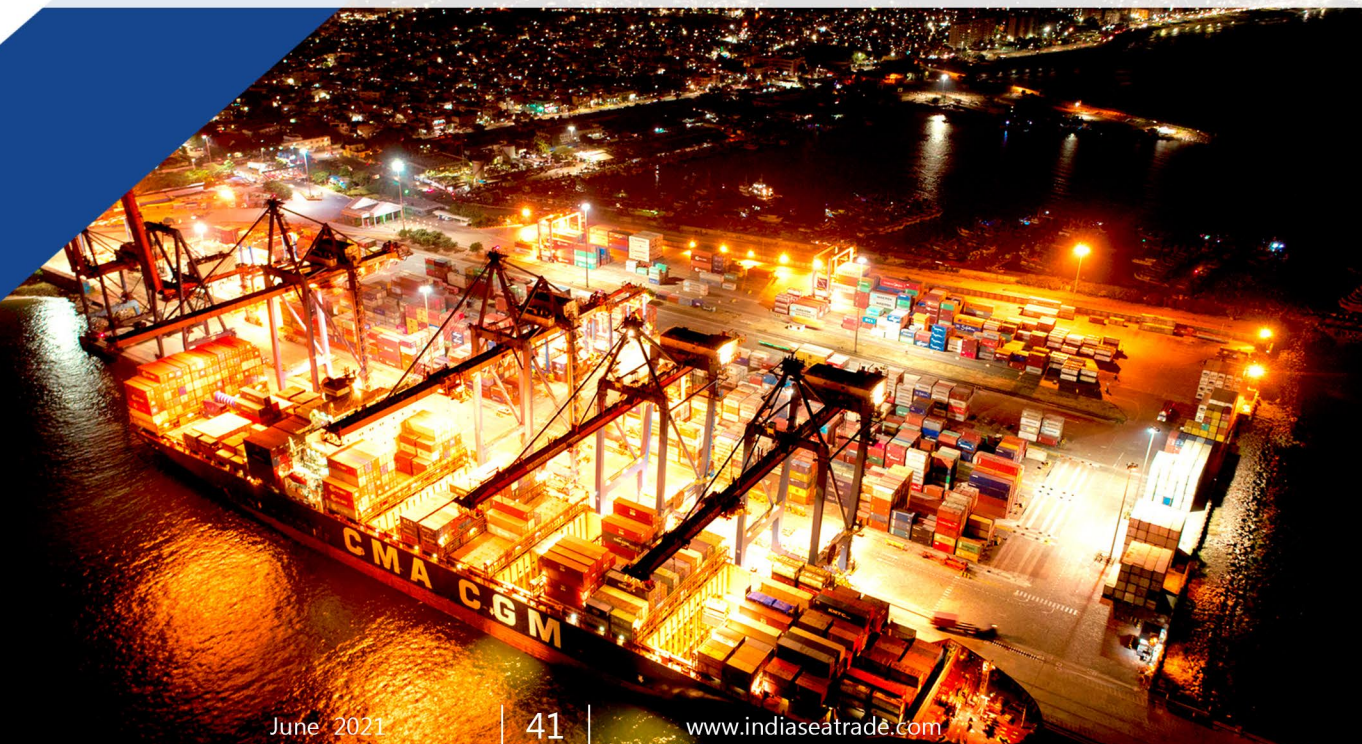
The irony is that Vadhavan port which is being developed by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) will directly compete with JNPT for cargo. “Why would JNPT develop Vadhavan port which will eat into its own cargo,” asked a Mumbai-based port consultant.

He, however, said that there could be a case for new ports/terminals in certain instances purely on logistic considerations. For example, steel makers would prefer to have a port near their plants to reduce the cost of importing raw materials and shipping finished goods, the consultant said.

The chief executive officer of a private port operating company said that the government should put a freeze on new ports/terminals till the existing facilities reach at least 70% capacity utilisation. “This will ensure the commercial viability of the existing facilities and prevent them from turning into non-performing assets,” the CEO whose firm runs terminals across a few major ports said.

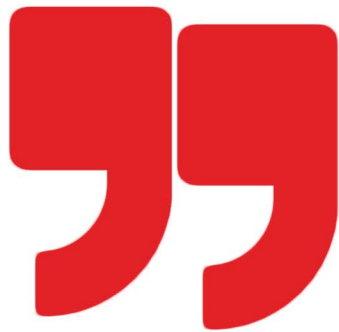
A reckless and mindless expansion of port capacity to pander to political interests should be avoided at all costs, he added.

The port consultant mentioned earlier said that India had enough port capacity to cater to demand for the next ten years. 📍





# The relevance of ship agents in a digitalised maritime trade



**Capt. Ajay Kaura,**  
Executive Director,  
Federation of Ship Agents Association

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Lot has been discussed for years about digitalization and its role in maritime trade. Players in the supply chains have been slow to adapt new technologies in comparison to other industries.

Recently, global maritime trade faced challenges due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Some of the players were in an advanced stage of digitalization but others were way behind. This pandemic laid the

foundation for a transformed industry.

In maritime trade, each player creates a process by which individuals organize their work to create seamless supply chain through interactions between the various actors.

While the process of digitalization in maritime trade has changed the roles of many of the actors involved in the business, digitalization offers new opportunities for these

players to be a part of information sharing that will go beyond the traditional structures of operations.

Digitalization is already transforming maritime trade, operations and strategies. Apart from the many positive effects of digitalization in maritime trade with respect to efficiency, safety, economic and energy saving, there are also risks like data abuse, cybercrime, etc.

Ship agents provide skilled local human resources and set up routines and procedures to ensure smooth functioning. Interaction between the players like agents, ship owners, charterers, customers, local authorities, terminals, inland transporters etc., play a very important role. Agent arranges ship berthing / unberthing, its cargo / husbandry operations, inland transportation, documentation, information sharing, repairs, legal matters, crew change, provisions and ship spares etc.

Ship agents have been active in the industry since the beginning of commercial shipping. They have been representing their principals locally with other players in the supply chain. They have the responsibility of fulfilling requirements of their principals locally. They form a network of connections with all players in the supply chain and coordinates through skilled man power for routine visits in their territories and special services. They develop processes and procedures keeping local requirements, laws or regulations in mind.

The ship agents' main purpose of connecting their clients to services, people and information will not change but the means of delivering services or information are continually changing because of technology. With digitalization flow of information is faster, reliable and cost saving. Manual interventions are being reduced.

Earlier stakeholders tried to optimize their operations based on limited information in hand. However many things do not turn out according to initial plans and changes are not well communicated resulting in last minute rescheduling. With digital interaction between the players, exchange of information is in real time which assists in establishing capabilities for updating and re-assigning.

This assists in optimizing the resources and giving timely reliable information to all concerned. It also helps in monitoring the status and progress of transport / cargo.

Digitization of the supply chain has challenges for ship agents. Increased implementation of digital data sharing is

changing traditional information sharing physically or through emails. Enhanced digital collaboration is inevitable for efficiency, optimization, sustainability, improvement, minimized delays, common awareness and environmental gains for service providers and consumers. Ship agents continue to strive to enhance their service levels and value additions in the supply chain. Efforts are now being taken to better synchronize beyond individual actors to a more collaborative\ data sharing approach by:

- » Increased interaction on vessel operations at previous ports, what happens at sea to allow for just-in-time arrivals.
- » Providing new standards for digital messaging and interfacing to enable accessibility to data for all involved actors in the supply chain.
- » Digital invoicing, bills of lading and deliveries. Ship agents can therefore continue to fulfil their core role in providing reliable data to parties requiring services and capabilities and for those that provide such services and capabilities.

The ability to digital data sharing and greater visibility of product could enhance the role of agents in embracing digitalization. With the ability of the ship agents to collect and analyse incoming data and sharing same with other players in the supply chain opens new opportunities to change and enhance their business model.

Port Community System (PCS) is intended to integrate the electronic flow of trade related documents / information and function as the centralized hub for the ports of India and other stakeholders.

Similarly, data sharing related to ship berthing, cargo operations with ports and government agencies has brought efficiency, improvement, optimization and cost reduction. The services can be given against real time data which can assist in optimizing delivery of local services and information to other players and customers. Ship operators will favour agencies that are digitally enabled and can also support their requirements for digital data.

Primary source of information, physical interactions, creating new business opportunities with routine interactions digitalized will transcend the role of the shipping agent. 🔄

## About Author :

Capt. Ajay Kaura, he is Executive Director of Federation of Ship Agents Association (FEDSAI) and Former President of Northern India Steamer Agents Association (NISAA)

**Dhruv Krishna Kotak**  
Managing Director  
JM Baxi Group



## Re-aligning the Transshipment Ports

To ease port  
congestion



J M BAXI GROUP

**India Seatrade** endeavors to capture the perception and mood of the leadership in various organizations and their response to the various stimuli of the current business environment. In this edition, we have **Dhruv Krishna Kotak**, Managing Director, J.M Baxi group, who talks about the container trade from terminal operator's perspective and offers an innovative solution to ease traffic congestion at ports. Here are the excerpts from the freewheeling conversation with him:

**Q** The last year and the first half of this year has perhaps been the most difficult time for the world where unpredictability and risk have held almost everything to ransom. How has this been for J.M Baxi Group and could you throw some light on how your organization has responded to this situation?

India's industrial segment continues to show resilience amid Covid-19 pandemic. The last quarter of 2020 and the start of current FY offers plenty of reasons to remain excited.

Further, the business fraternity has responded sharply in many matters particularly in providing aid and support to the needy through their CSR. In our case, J.M Baxi has been at the forefront of these activities being associated with enabling availability of nearly 2500 oxygen cylinders most of which have been purchased. We also assisted various state governments with assistance of Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Wan Hai Lines, ONE, Samudera and Prime Maritime besides others who have volunteered their support in ensuring quick delivery of medical equipment.

JMB recognizes that mere charity is not sufficient, the country, its population and fiscal situation needs even stronger foundation to build on inherent capabilities to further strengthen the national mission of growth. We need to ensure that in the present challenging times, our focus on handling the situation does not lead to a loss of direction to provide resources to capitalize on future potential and opportunities.

**Q** As a container terminal operator, what is your comment on the current container movement globally and its impact on the Indian trade?

EXIM business accounts for over 40% of India's GDP. In the recent times, the trade in India has been affected by capacity constraints such as shortage of containers, blank sailings, missed connections etc., all of which have a serious retarding effect on the availability and competitiveness of Indian goods in the international market. This in turn affects India's forex earning capabilities and potentially have a compounding effect to the already stressed business and industry environment that today faces increasing unemployment.

While the Far East, WB and EB trade routes see a multifold increase in freight rates and due to congestions at various transshipment ports, there are increasing instances of "cut and run" sailings by lines to meet schedule commitments. This has resulted in empties being accumulated at certain ports leaving other ports experience acute shortage and amongst the most affected has been India. The effect is most evident from the eastern seaboard of India from where clients have been seeking equipment and services

at J M Baxi Group's Terminals like VCTPL in Vizag on the East Coast.

In order to focus on increasing efficiencies and support the trade and carrier fraternity, J.M Baxi group's integrated services continues to invest on capacity building and service enhancements.

**Q** While this is a welcome step, certain factors are beyond your control such as shortage of containers in India. What could be possible solutions according to you to ease this situation?

Yes, the shipping fraternity in India has had several challenges recently but they have handled the situation extremely well. We know that quite a few carriers have repositioned empties into India at high cost to alleviate the shortage. While more needs to be done, certain structural changes to service patterns can assist further. For e.g. transshipment location. The regular transshipment hubs that are used to cover Indian spoke ports remain stressed. However a certain re-alignment to using alternative facilities and with minor schedule adjustments, major part of these challenges can be overcome. To cite an example, if cargo to India's north east can be transshipped via Vizag in lieu of other large regional ports that are currently used can ease pressure. These may also turn out to be significantly cheaper for the Indian customer. The infrastructure within India is geared to handle this.

Permit me to recap various initiatives at the Vizag terminal:

- VCTPL is an ideal gateway for fast increasing local container traffic of Andhra Pradesh and very naturally for fast developing states of Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha. VCTPL also offers viable and cost-efficient connectivity to Eastern Maharashtra and Eastern UP.
- Work on the expansion of quay length at VCT to 845 m from the current 450 m is expected to be completed by end 2021. 100 meters of 395-meter quay is already operational because of which 2 vessels can simultaneously be handled ensuring no berthing delays. Additional backup area of 6 acres gives the terminal a capacity of handling 1.3 M TEUs. To cater to the anticipated increase in volume, three super post panamax cranes and nine e-RTGCs will be added by September 2021.
- The continuing inventory shortage has in the recent times led to conversion of containerized cargo like Ingots, rice, steel, ferro alloys to bulk besides unfortunatedelays of important cargoes like pharma and seafood which addresses global requirement.



- VCTPL continues to support the growing volumes to Nepal with over 30 train running each month and increasing. The industrially growing regions of Jajpur and Jharsuguda in Odisha are rail connected too with VCT and demands more rail services from current 25 rakes each month. Hyderabad will be connected by early next month and other regions like Nagpur and NCR too are expected to be reconnected by rail.
- It will also be pertinent to remind that VCTPL is ready to be the ideal transshipment hub. There are some feeder services connecting Colombo, Kolkata and Haldia. More services remain under discussion. VCTPL is at advanced stage of discussion for connecting with other Bay of Bengal ports like Chittagong and Yangon.

**?** Would you believe that increasing capacity at some ports alone will assist to ease the bottle necks or other challenges faced....?

**A**ctually quite the opposite. Capacity increases or ability to increase capacity at short notice and agility to respond to change is the key to fulfilling customer expectations.

At J.M.Baxi, we have given equal focus to almost all our facilities. If you take our terminal at Haldia, an RMQC will be added here besides widening the gate and the approach road as well. There is work going on for a new rail link between Durgachawk and HDS.


Similarly, at Kandla we are evaluating additional yard area






besides adding 2 new RMQCs. Our ICD at Sonapat has added 10 acres of land for increased area for the facility. Work is on for bringing more rakes to cater to anticipated demand increase, more trucks for quick turnaround. At the DICT as well as at our CFS in Mumbai, we have added a cold store with 8000 pallets capacity in an arrangement with IG. Again in Mumbai we have developed a container storage depot, working on warehouses for storage and distribution etc... so we are taking a more holistic view of the current needs of the customer and also preparing for the future.

As an agency house, project logistics provider or as an NVOCC all our verticals are trying to widen the scope and broaden the base of our operations.

 Given this scenario when would you think normalcy will be restored?

It will be difficult to predict this. As you can see Europe and certain other parts of the world are seeing the third wave and are already in advanced stages of preparation to counter the fall out. India is still recovering from the second wave. But as I said, the resilience and spirit of the Indian Industry and its helmsmen is exemplary. To support them the shipping fraternity must continue to work towards offering innovative solutions and work on new paths instead of sailing in the same current always. 



# Coastal movement should be incentivized!

**Niranjan Mishra**  
Business Head, JK Cements Ltd.

Cement manufacturers are increasingly relying on moving their stocks through coastal shipping as it helps them save costs. One such cement producer is JK Cements Ltd. who move their products to south Indian ports on the west and east coasts. We have with us Niranjan Mishra, Business Head, JK Cements Ltd. who spoke to India Seatrade on using the coastal route. Read on...

## JK Cement LTD.

**Q** As one of the top cement producers, how do you manage your logistics requirements?

**W**e utilise multimodal means of movement for the stocks, in order to ensure optimisation of time and costs. We have a fully functional logistics cell, which keeps a watch on the industry trends and is always on the lookout to identify efficient modes and routes for movements on a real-time basis.

**Q** How much of your cement stock moves by road, rail and sea?

**W**e utilise the sea route only in respect of supplies into South India and some markets on the east coast. The balance movements are shared between rail and road, and the mix depends on a multitude of reasons - like urgency of movement, the depth of coverage, commercial dynamics etc. Owing to the dynamic nature of freight costs, the combinations keep changing on a very regular basis.

As for as the sea route is concerned, on the west coast, we use Mundra, Kandla, Mangalore Port, and Cochin Port (DP World Terminal), while on the east coast Tuticorin Port, Chennai Port, Visakhapatnam Port, Paradip Port etc. are being used.

**Q** How do you address your sea transportation requirements?


**W**e are essentially a cement manufacturer and rely on our logistics partners for helping us reach the produce to the markets. Our logistics partners handle the movement of our cargo through sea. We however, closely track the movement of our cargo from the time it leaves our facility and reaches the destination.

**Q** Do you have plans to enter coastal shipping for better control over logistics?

**A**s stated earlier, we rely on our logistics partners for


## VERTICAL FOCUS

helping us transport our produce. However, we would like to have more flexibility in terms of vessel sizes to be able to cater to a greater number of markets through smaller ports along the coastline. However, this is easier said than done as this connectivity requires a substantial infrastructure investment in terms of road connectivity to these ports. This would help smoother movements of the containers to and from these smaller ports. Incentivisation of sea movement of goods which has been in the news for some time now, if implemented will also help in better control and help in maximising this shift.

 **What are the digital technologies being adopted for transporting cement?**

**T**here is a lot of development taking place in this space. Automation is happening in a lot of industry segments by way of RFIDs, Fastag, GPS tracking and this will help in minimising the human interface thereby eliminating the errors. The data thus generated will help in understanding and identifying inefficiencies in the system and work on the improvements.



 **What are the challenges inherent to coastal shipping, according to you?**

### Last mile connectivity

The integrated logistics cost in case of coastal shipping is economically viable only if the producers/consumers of the shipped goods are within a distance of around 100 km from the loading/unloading point at the port side. This last mile connectivity often proves to be a challenge in India driving up the overall cost of transportation via coastal shipping.


### Development of new ports

Need to increase small ports for better operations. At present, some big ports are highly congested and are always under pressure and their efficiency has come down. There fore, development of small ports is necessary.


### Lack of lucrative government schemes

Unlike other channels of transportation, the government has not made any efforts to benefit coastal shipping users financially.



 **What is your growth strategy?**

**M**aximisation of revenues with commensurate optimisation of costs is the basic premise on which the businesses will work in the times to come.

 **Do you observe any changing patterns in the demand for cement over the last one year?**

**Y**es, white cement demand increased by 10% in last one year. The usage of white cement increased in value added products.



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# RoDTEP : Delays leading to opportunities missed

Even after five months of announcing the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme, there is no clarity on the specific rates at which the remissions are allowed for exporters - leading to uncertainty and confusion among the export community.

RoDTEP is an incentive scheme, which is aimed at replacing the Merchandise Exports Incentive Scheme (MEIS), for exporters where a rebate on the FOB value of the export products will be remitted back to the exporters. RoDTEP is a WTO-compliant scheme that will cover certain input costs like different types of taxes and cess incurred by the exporters during the manufacturing and exporting process.

The scheme was announced by the Minister of Finance in March 2020 and came into effect from 1st January 2021. The Commerce Ministry has appointed a special committee

headed by G.K. Pillai, former commerce secretary, to arrive at the refund rates for various export products.

It has been earlier reported in the media that the major cause of delay is due to the differences between the commerce ministry and the finance ministry over the rates finalisation. Another reason could be that with lack of proper data on costing of export products even with the exporters, the committee has faced challenges in fixing rates for 8000 odd export product types that leave the Indian shores every year.

In spite of the announcement by the Director General of Foreign Trade, Amit Yadav in mid-May that the rates will be announced by end of May, nothing has been fructified till now. On 7th June, Ajay Sahai, Director General of FIEO, informed in a media interaction that the refund rates for

## SPECIAL FEATURE

export promotion scheme will likely be announced in another 10 days. No further updates were available in this regard by the time this article was published.

As a result, exporters by and large are eagerly waiting for the refund rates. The more the wait, the more the uncertainty and confusion. On top of this, the refunds under the MEIS and SEIS schemes are still pending. Though the announcement of RoDTEP scheme had offered a ray of hope, the subsequent delays have only dampened the enthusiasm of the exporters who are already burdened with pending refunds from earlier schemes. This not only makes the Indian products uncompetitive in the foreign markets but also can derail the export growth so far achieved.

A look at the Indian exports over the last few months suggests they have displayed solid growth and stability - thanks to the surprisingly quick rebound in the economy before the 2nd wave of Covid-19 hit the country. After breaching US\$ 34 billion mark in March, the exports stood at US\$ 30.63 billion in April and US\$ 32.21 in May. If this trend is to continue, it could also play a key role in providing a cushion to India's growth engine as well as the GDP growth at a time when the domestic economy is battered by the 2nd wave of the pandemic.

RBI too feels that the government must stand by the exporters in this opportune time by providing them a targeted policy support. In the wake of the upswing in exports in the months March, April and May, RBI in its latest policy statement said, "With external demand strengthening, a rebound in global trade is taking hold, which should support India's export sector. Global demand conditions are expected to improve further buoyed by fiscal stimulus packages and the fast progress of vaccination in advanced economies. India's exports in March, April and May 2021 have launched into an upswing. Conducive external conditions are forming for a durable recovery beyond pre-pandemic levels. The need of the hour is for enhanced and targeted policy support for exports. It is opportune now to give further policy push by focusing on quality and scalability."

FIEO President Sharad Kumar Saraf too mentioned in a recent media interaction that it is high time a stable policy support is provided by notifying the RoDTEP rates, and releasing the pending MEIS and SEIS rates and other benefits at the earliest.

While the government has their own priorities and reasons in allocating and releasing funds for export incentive schemes, too much of delay can lead to derailing of the growth achieved so far and put burden on the exporters' working capital and profit margins. Without stable profit margins, business scalability and growth of exports can take a hit. 🚫



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# DAHEJ PORT



Dahej is a fair weather lighterage port located at the junction of Guljaria and Ban creek, on the west coast of the country near the Gulf of Cambay. It is 45 km east of Bharuch city. Anchorage point is 5 Kms away from Old Dahej Port.

Dahej handled 30.5 MMT of traffic in 2020-21 with a negative growth of -9.2% over the previous year. However, it has been experiencing a steady growth over the years at an annual rate of 5.91%. Dahej contributes to about 7.66% of the total state traffic.

The major commodities handled at Dahej include LNG, Coal, Copper, Rock Phosphate, and Naphtha among others.

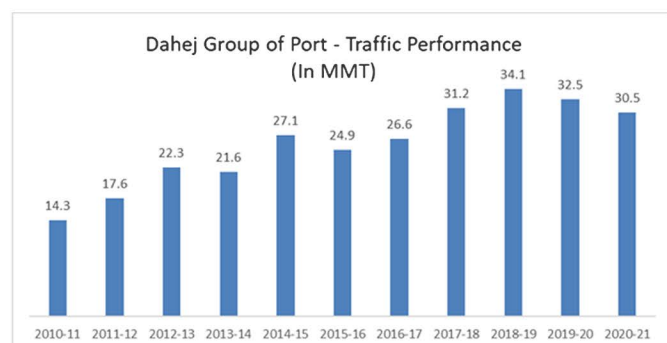


## Sub Ports/Jetties

Dahej Group of ports contains one GMB jetty, two captive jetties, and three private ports.

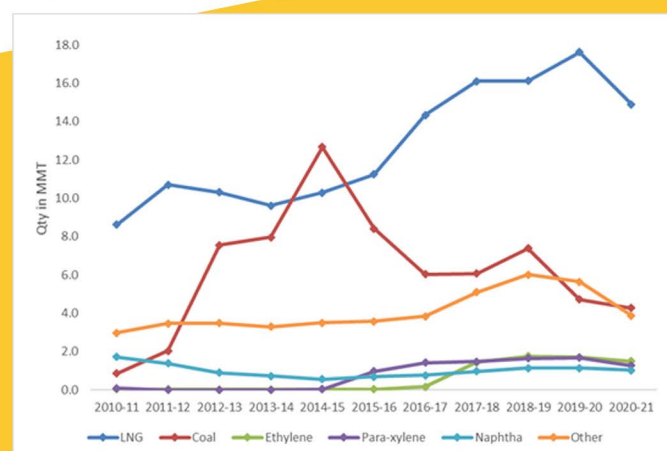
Name of Jetty	Location	Operator	Draft (m)	Capacity (MMTPA)
<b>GMB Jetties:</b>				
Old Port	Dahej	GMB	–	0.4
<b>Captive Jetties:</b>				
Dahej Harbour & Infrastructure Ltd	Dahej	Dahej Harbour & Infrastructure Ltd	16	04
Reliance (IPCL)	Dahej	Reliance Group	6.5	2.1
<b>Private Ports:</b>				
Gujarat Chemical Port Limited	Dahej	Gujarat Chemical Port Limited	14	06
Petronet LNG Terminal	Dahej	Petronet LNG Ltd	12.7	17.5
Solid Cargo Port Terminal (APDPPL)	Dahej	Adani Group	14	20

## Traffic Performance



The major commodities handled at Dahej Group of Ports include Coal, Rock Phosphate, LNG, Naphtha and Copper Concentrate.

## Traffic Performance



## Top Companies:

Major port-based companies	Products
Gujarat Alkalies & Chemicals Limited	Phosphoric Acid
Indian Petrochemicals Corporation limited (IPCL)	Ethane, Propylene, Butadiene etc.
Petronet LNG Limited	Regassification of LNG
Welspun	Saw Pipes, Plates and Coils
BASF	Polymers of Styrene

## Industrial Profile of Baruch

Dahej Port falls under the State Investment Region (SIR) known as Dahej Petroleum Chemicals & Petrochemical Investment Region (PCPIR). There are three operational SEZs in Bharuch which are Dahej SEZ Limited, Sterling SEZ Infrastructure Pvt Ltd and Jubilant Infrastructure Ltd.

A total of eleven industrial estates are present in Bharuch. There are total of 16,524 industrial units registered in Bharuch of which over 11,500 are small and medium scale industrial units. Ankleshwar is known as the major industrial centre in Bharuch as it has over 70 medium and large-scale industries.

The industrial development in Bharuch is attributed to the presence of chemicals & petrochemicals, textiles, drug and pharmaceuticals, and ports & ship building industries.

Bharuch's economy is highly dependent on the industries

which are established in the town. It also enjoys its position as one of the major port cities in Gujarat state. Traditionally, Bharuch is known as the hub of the peanut processing as the peanuts of Bharuch have a well-developed marketing brand all over the country. However, it houses other industries such as cotton, fertilizers, dairy products, dyes, textiles, paints, chemicals, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering, ports and ship building.

The chemical and petrochemical industries are primarily flourishing in the Jubilant SEZ and the PCPIR. The Jubilant SEZ also consists of pharmaceuticals industries and it is spread in 265 acres of land at Vilayat GIDC industrial estate.

The presence of textiles is also large with presence of Bharuch textile mills and textile processing industries in Ankleshwar. The shipbuilding companies in Bharuch include ABG Shipyard (currently NPA) and Shoft Shipyard. ©

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“

*Healthy communication  
with your team  
is the key to success*

”

**Manisha Mehani,**

Head-Business Development, Pooja Logistics India Pvt. Ltd.

This month, we have **Manisha Mehani**, Head-Business Development at Pooja Logistics India Pvt. Ltd. in the She Matters section. She talks about how her experiences in working in the male-dominated warehousing and cold chain industry and how she has succeeded in leading her team to success.

**START TIME**

**How did you start career in Warehousing, Logistics and Supply Chain? And what influenced you to join the sector?**

Joining the logistics sector was never planned. I worked in insurance and media sectors for three years and was happily enjoying that phase of my career when one fine day a consultant called and persuaded me to give an interview at a logistics company. So, I went just to see how start-ups are. I got selected after two rounds and was asked to join at earliest. I was apprehensive, took time but then decided to take - thinking the bigger the challenge, the bigger would be the opportunity. Once I got in, there was no looking back. I have been working in warehousing and logistics industry for more than 12 years now. I have been very lucky to always have best of mentors who have guided me very well, colleagues and supportive team to communicate and work with. Roles I have got and projects I have worked, have really helped me shape up my career well.

**OFFICE TIME**

**What are the challenges you've faced as a woman in a male-dominant field?**

As it is rightly said, we don't grow when things are easy, we grow when we've faced challenges. All the companies I have worked with in this industry has given me good environment. I agree there was either no female colleague or just a few. Still there was never any major challenge that I faced except a few like travelling to city outskirts to visit warehouses or other site visits or travelling late hours. Though I have managed the same with supportive team. Rest assured, when you are so much passionate about your work, want to learn and perform, these challenges never bother you.

These days industry is equally open to both genders and I have seen many young girls and women taking up roles not only in sales, customer service or backend but also ground operations roles and performing efficiently. There are many warehouse operations being managed by 70% women staff and I always motivate any female who comes up to me to seek any guidance to join sector.



Manisha with her husband Saurav Kumar.

**SLEEP TIME**

**How effective are your rest and restorations?**

It is all about balance. The industry we work in demand your availability and agility 24x7. But taking out time for yourself is important and this not only helps to unwind but also to restore your energy to work on bigger projects and to foster new ideas with better focus. Creating an effective and efficient team and delegating work really helps in maintaining this balance for yourself and for team as well.

**FOCUS TIME**

**How well do you manage your attention, focus, performance, concentration and goal setting?**

First, planning your work is key. Defining what's urgent and what's important is must to deal with day-to-day challenges that comes your way. Second, communicating with team on regular basis and motivating them to act in best of their capacity independently helps to create a fearless and strong team.



## SHE MATTERS

I believe in being open to learn new things every single day from your team, your colleagues, customers or to that matter any one you meet. It is always best to take suggestions from team in any tough situation rather than directing them. This not only gets best out of situation but also a confident team and their performance and ultimately overall company's performance and growth.

### CONNECTED TIME

**What is the dynamic in your core relationships? What is the give and the take?**

It is all about communication and giving time. Communication actually works out all differences in ideas and thoughts you have. This is applicable in both personal and professional fronts. Listening to one another is also a great way to communicate. Being available and giving time is important as everyone looks out for that presence and support you need.

Regular communication with customers actually helps you get true feedback, helps in building stronger relations. Customers discuss their business needs and may actually follow your feedback. Staying connected with industry peers helps in staying updated about trends and sharing your experiences.

### PLAY TIME

**Do you create sufficient time for laughing, having fun, creating adventures and taking risks**

Taking time for your family, friends and most important for yourself is necessary. Travelling, small vacations and family trips really helps you relax from never ending hustles. Though travelling isn't happening due to the pandemic, but yes, I love spending time with my twins, cooking healthy food for them and my favourite calming activity is gardening. It helps to unwind and relax by spending time in my small green space. Off late I have started devoting whatever time I get in mandala art therapy.

### DOWN TIME

**How are you carving out the space to allow new ideas to take shape?**

I have always been self-motivated, passionate for my work and willing to adjust in any situation and that brings out best. Having worked in sales and business development you learn to deal with anyone saying NO to you while still being positive.

As I said earlier communication and being open to learning every day is the best way to foster new ideas and bring best out of any situation and it has to be two-way. This way, it helps in organizational growth as well as your own growth.

### TIME IN

**How often do you reflect on your empathy, compassion and how well you've shown up for yourself and others today?**

I have always believed in being empathetic to others. This is important both in your personal as well as professional life. It's all about listening to others - be it your team member, your customer, colleague, your boss etc. - connecting emotionally without being judgemental and holding a message that you are there to identify with their needs. I have seen that on the professional front without empathy many people struggle to relate to each other or think about each other's interests and that leads to poor team work. I have always been there for team and this actually brings in more collaborative environment at work, you are more connected with your team, your peers, your customers, your management, your vendors etc. 🧡



# THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LOGISTICS



**Pradeep Raman**  
Vice President - Strategic Business  
Wiz Freight

Technology in logistics in the last few years have been largely in the area of tracking parcels and cargo, be it domestic or in the EXIM

segment. The penetration of technology has been very minimal and off late people have started realising the need for it. In the next few years technology will be used both in the EXIM space and in the domestic space as an end-to-end integrator, be it for milestone updating or real time tracking. Technology is also being adopted in the flow of data through blockchain and other integrated data services through Cloud. The pandemic has made customers to realise the need to work with logistics partners who are tech-oriented without the need to be physically present. This trend will only grow as time progresses.



**Chitransh Sahai**  
Co-Founder & Director  
Gocomet

To remain competitive in the new world, brands must embrace innovation, respond to disruptions such as the pandemic, and

leverage the power of automation to transform the way their supply chains operate, creating process resilience and driving double-digit cost savings. This is the only way forward.



**Shruti Saraf**  
Customer Advocacy Specialist  
Cogoport

"The past several years in the logistics industry have featured more transformational changes than the previous century, and the effects are beginning to be recognised. The maturation of globalisation, the exponential rise of e-commerce and the most recent COVID-19 are serving as catalysts for technology adoption in logistics. As I sit down to reflect on yesteryears - one truth becomes abundantly clear: Logistics has entered a transformative decade and the role of technology will be changing in multi-folds to shape up the logistics industry as a whole."



**Sarjak Sheth**  
Director  
Sharp Logistics Pvt. Ltd.  
(A Saksham Group Company)

'I think technology has become a necessity rather than a luxury. For a shipper it is important to invest time in the core business rather than drain value through unorganized logistics. Logistics start-ups around the world are talking more about analytical logistics rather than digital logistics now. With real-time information and visibility, it is now possible to take more data-driven decisions, thus allowing an efficient supply chain and faster turnaround. Technology has been the power house in our company and, seamless customer experience with a human-less interface has been the direction for my passion.'

**iFreightBox**  
Collaborative Logistics

# Connecting All Stakeholders with Real-Time Communication

**Bhavesh Solanki**  
CEO, iFreightBox.

iFreightBox, technology solution for logistics service providers, was started by **Bhavesh Solanki** as a part time project in 2016. It took him more than two years to perfect the concept and fix the bugs. Once the ball was set to roll, there was no stopping. He describes in his own words about the journey behind iFreightBox and plans ahead.







**What sets you apart from many other start-up technology companies looking to disrupt the logistics industry?**

Since 2006, I am working in Supply Chain Industry to develop and implement Technology solution in various segments including Ocean and Air Freight Forwarding, Customs, Warehouse Operations, Container Freight Stations, FTWZ (Free Trade Warehousing Zone), Transportations, Contract Management and Financials Accounting in many countries across the world including South East Asia, Middle East, Europe and USA region.

During this period, I identified various challenges faced by operations, accounts, customers and service providers. The major one was communication, no workflow, real-time data collection and updating, duplication of work and maintaining excel files even though system is in place, lack of analytics and reporting, more offline communication and doing many unwanted tasks which reduces operation efficiency and increases employees time spent on shipment processing which resulted into late customer invoicing, extra credit period, delay in payment and weak cash flow and overall it impacts the growth of an organization.

During my past experience I found there is no such technology solution which connects all stakeholders into one single system and provide real-time visibility and to collect data where it gets generated. The existing technology solutions were developed in old programming languages and have lots of limitations to provide real time data collection and analytics.

Companies that need to move things from A to B still use archaic technology and operate as siloed islands. This results in billions of dollars of inefficiency and missed opportunities. The world needs a disruptive change. So, in this context, we are bringing new technology to connect and transform an industry that has been lacking in innovation for decades. I started designing iFreightBox in 2016 and worked on collaborative logistics technology solutions. Currently we touched upon road transportation industry and implemented iFreightBox TMS in more than 10 companies in India, USA and expanding to Middle East and European markets.



**How and when did the idea to set up ifreightbox germinate?**

I use to continuously update my skills on technology and understood that new generation programming language, tools and technology gives us great power, capability to bring better solutions in the industry. In 2016, I took the final decision and started working on Logistics Collaborative Platform. The company where I used to work at that time

supported me by allowing to pursue my quest in this space while working. Thanks to Mr. Sanjay Kikla for the trust and support. After burning the midnight oil for 6 to 8 months the whole concept prototype was designed. Then I started demonstrating it to logistics leaders and friends. Industry has upraised and liked the idea. This gave me more confidence.

Post designing the prototype, I started pitching this prototype directly to prospective customers and not the investors. I got my second customer in 2017 handling Transportation domain business, a public limited company with likeminded management team in South India having more than 100 vehicles handling FTL and LTL transportation business who selected us as a technology service provider. We started the product development with a small team in Mumbai and went live in 2018 with our first version. Last financial year this company has conducted more than 34000 trips successfully with our system along with accounting system.



**Did you get funding from angel investors or PE funds?**

We never pitched to any investors. We kept adding new customers onboard and increased our revenue and every year we were profitable. We currently have a 1500sq.ft. development centre in Surat, Gujarat and registered office in Mumbai and partners network in USA, Dubai and Europe. In two years, we added more than 10 customers in India and USA and we are continuously adding more customers every month.

Our last year growth was 50% higher than previous year. We now welcome Angle Investors and PE Funds who are interested in supporting us to boost our product development and to increase global sales.

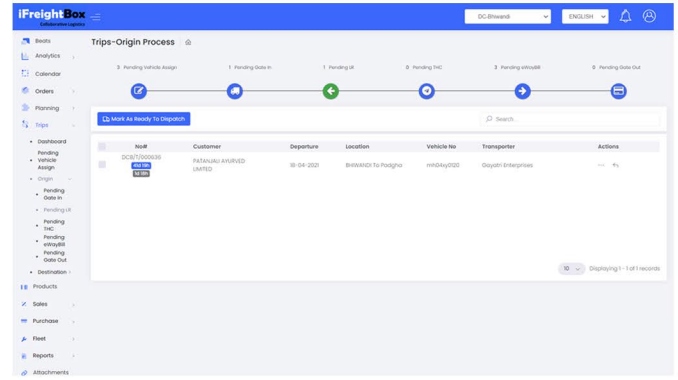
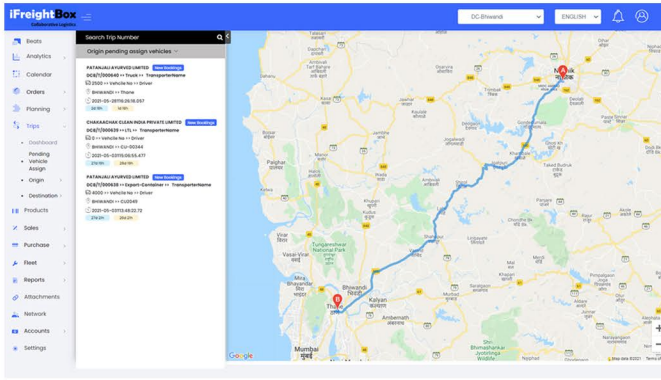


**How has the business panned out since it was launched?**

Initially our first version was incomplete and due to that we restricted adding more customers and spent more time on completing full system development for transportation function. We fixed the bugs and performance complaints, overcome all challenges and stabilized the product. We also moved to Microsoft Azure Cloud to improve performance of the system.

We are currently growing at 50% growth rate and adding more customers and team members. The current version of TMS is really rated well as compared to competition in the market as per prospective customers.

# TREND - IT MATTERS



## What has been the customer response to your digital offerings?

We have been successful in retaining our existing customers due to our flexible engagement model, 24x7 agile support with faster response time. The most liked feature by existing and prospective customers is the simple, user-friendly and intuitive look and feel.

We have done different types TMS implementation till now, which help to manage FTL & LTL transportation business, warehouse distribution and milk-runs, transport aggregation, modern trade supply chain fulfilment and solutions for freight forwarders and EXIM container movements with accounting system. We connect all stakeholders into one system and provide real-time communication and visibility.

Our Solution offers Process Workflow, Real-time data capturing, Monitoring and Controlling, Tracking, Visibility, Proactive Exception Handling, Contextual Communication and Real-time Reporting and Mobile App for Drivers and Delivery Agents to improve operation efficiency and increase customer's growth. We also have multi-currency and multilingual support built into this product.

## Since launching what are the challenges you faced on the ground and how did you overcome them?

The entire 2018 went into finetuning the product and in 2019 we started selling it in the market and from Mar-2020 Covid-19 pandemic had started. Initially we were scared of being a start-up and having a very small cash flow, spent lots of money from credit cards and we thought that we will not able to survive due to complete lockdown.

Our social media engagement with prospective customers helped us a lot. We started getting new inquiries as logistics companies began to understand the importance of online, contact free, delivery solutions and system to manage their

business from anywhere, anytime and on any device, while moving from traditional logistics to becoming digital logistics companies. We felt like hitting the bull's eye and realised that our product has better opportunity to grow in the market and we are on right track.

When whole world was reducing staff at that time, we started offering Overtime to our employees and requested to work 50% extra time and get 50% extra salary. Companies were reducing staff and salary to survive, while we were giving more salary to survive and to grow. We spent the income generated in satisfying our customers and delivered the product to their satisfaction. All our team are happy and working from home as they were given complete freedom to work anytime and get the job done and get extra money.

We got another requirement from Mexico based Freight Forwarder who was scouting for solutions for transport aggregation system for their business and we cracked that deal through our local USA channel partner. The challenge was that the client wanted the solution in Spanish language. So, we converted entire system and mobile app into multilingual.

We are continuing the same and reached first 10 customers last year adding new customers in our portfolio. We are now focusing more on how to reduce implementation timelines. As of now, our standard implementation time is 15 days, down from 2 months a couple of years ago.

## What are your long-term plans and goals?

- ✘ To become a Rs. 500 crores company in 5 years.
- ✘ To develop complete supply chain solutions to manage global logistics business using one single collaborative system from eCommerce to import-export and last mile delivery
- ✘ To become global technology company
- ✘ To provide Value Innovation product





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