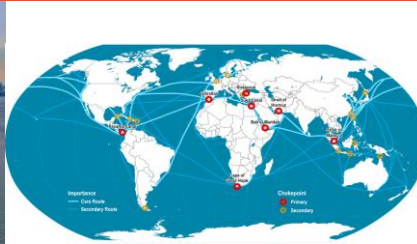


## Indian Maritime News Express

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### International Maritime Trade & Transport



### Wan Hai fire-hit boxship towed toward Middle East after 11 weeks



The fire-damaged *Wan Hai 503* is being towed across the Arabian Sea toward the Middle East after spending nearly 11 weeks stranded without a port of refuge, following rejections from both Sri Lanka and India.

The 4,333 teu containership (built 2005) caught fire on June 9 off Kerala, southwest India, after an under-deck explosion. Four of the 22 crew were killed and six injured in the accident. The ship, en route from Colombo to Nhava Sheva, was around 50 nautical miles off the Indian coast at the time.

Despite salvage teams stabilising the vessel and cooling the smouldering cargo holds, authorities in India ordered the vessel out of its exclusive economic zone by late June, while Sri Lanka subsequently refused permission for the boxship to call. The ship spent more than two months in limbo on the high seas while operators sought a safe harbour.

Wan Hai confirmed on August 25 that the *Wan Hai 503* is now under tow, with its structural integrity, stability, and draft assessed as safe for the voyage. The company said weather-routing software had been used to map a course across the Arabian Sea. The final port of refuge has not yet been disclosed, though Jebel Ali and Khorfakkan are understood to be under consideration.

"The towage and monitoring will continue under close supervision to ensure a safe and smooth arrival," the Taiwanese liner said.

The ordeal has drawn comparisons with the *Maersk Frankfurt*, which in 2023 was also forced to steam across the Arabian Sea to Khorfakkan following a fire off India. Unlike the *Wan Hai 503*, that vessel remained under its own power.

## **Australia Seizes \$64 Million Worth of Amphetamines Hidden In Spring Roll Shipment**



Australian Border Force (ABF) officers have intercepted 900 kilograms of amphetamine worth more than \$64 million in Sydney, in one of the largest drug busts ever recorded in New South Wales.

The officers targeted a shipping container that had arrived from overseas at Port Botany on Wednesday, 20 August 2025.

The cargo was declared as "vegetable spring roll and more", but officers became suspicious after the container was x-rayed and anomalies were detected. When they unpacked the consignment, they found 100 boxes, each containing six rolls of plastic film wrapped around cardboard cores.

The ABF detector dog unit was called in, and one of the dogs reacted strongly after a cardboard roll was drilled into. Officers discovered white granules, which later tested positive for amphetamine, also known as "speed."

In total, 600 rolls of plastic film were found to contain the drug, each estimated to hold 1.5 kilograms. Altogether, the concealed drugs weighed about 900 kilograms. Authorities estimated the street value at more than \$64 million.

AFP Detective Superintendent Morgen Blunden said investigators have uncovered multiple instances of criminal groups hiding drugs in shipments linked to genuine businesses. He said that Port Botany has become a common entry point where AFP officers regularly seize drug-filled containers. (Source: Marine Insight)



Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday urged global stakeholders to see India as a maritime hub of investment and innovation, backed by the government's \$1 trillion maritime investment roadmap.

He made the remarks at Ambassadors' Roundtable Meet in New Delhi, hosted by Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), which brought together envoys from 28 countries, multilateral representatives, and industry leaders to discuss investment opportunities and partnerships in the run-up to India Maritime Week (IMW) 2025. The event chaired by Sonowal underlined India's growing role in global maritime trade, sustainable shipping and the blue economy.

"India's maritime journey is entering a new chapter under the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Sonowal said, pointing to flagship initiatives such as the Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

He emphasised opportunities across port development, cargo terminal operations, shipbuilding, ship repairs, ship recycling, green hydrogen hubs, and sustainable shipping solutions.

"Under the dynamic leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi ji, we are working to transform our ports, shipping, and logistics ecosystem into one that is resilient, sustainable, and future-ready, and this opens vast avenues for international collaboration. These opportunities open up a 1 trillion US dollars maritime investment roadmap, with strong potential for joint ventures in developing ports and cargo terminal operations, multi-modal terminals, maritime services, shipbuilding, ship recycling and ship repairs, green hydrogen hubs, and sustainable shipping solutions," he added.

Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shantanu Thakur underlined reforms in port modernisation, inland waterways expansion, and digital & green shipping.



"Our Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi ji has often emphasised that 'Ports are not just gateways of prosperity, but gateways of India's future.' Guided by this vision, India is modernising its maritime sector so that it becomes a pillar of nation-building, technology adoption, and sustainable development. As the world realises this potential, India has seen remarkable momentum in maritime investments and partnerships. Global players are joining hands with Indian counterparts in shipbuilding, port modernisation, smart logistics, and green shipping. Technology is at the heart of this progress—AI-driven logistics, digital port operations, and automation are making our ports more efficient and globally competitive", said Thakur.

A detailed presentation by R. Laxmanan, Joint Secretary, MoPSW, highlighted investment potential in upcoming mega projects such as the Vadhavan Port, Galathea Bay Transshipment Port, and Tuna Tekra Terminal, alongside plans for maritime industrial parks, LNG bunkering facilities, and green hydrogen hubs.

Delegates also discussed India's push towards blue economy growth, stressing sustainable use of ocean resources for livelihoods, as well as the role of digitalisation in making logistics more transparent and efficient. The importance of IFSC-GIFT City in enabling maritime financing and attracting global investment was also underlined.

Envoys lauded India's recent legislative reforms, including the introduction of five new laws – the Bills of Lading Act, Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, Merchant Shipping Act, Coastal Shipping Act, and Indian Ports Act – which replace colonial-era regulations and align India with international best practices.

Positioned as MoPSW's biennial flagship platform, IMW 2025 will be held at the NESCO Exhibition Centre, Mumbai, from October 27–31, 2025. The event will bring together policymakers, investors, and thought leaders to explore collaboration opportunities and shape the future of India's ports and logistics ecosystem.

"IMW 2025 will be a platform where ideas can translate into projects, and commitments into partnerships. India stands ready to collaborate and lead towards a maritime future that is prosperous, sustainable and inclusive," Sonowal said. (Source: DD News)



# Indian Port Sector

## Vizhinjam Port emerges as South Asia's new maritime powerhouse



**Thiruvananthapuram, August 27 (IANS):** Kerala's Vizhinjam International Port has crossed a historic milestone in record time, positioning itself as a global player in maritime trade, state Ports Minister V.N. Vasavan said on Wednesday.

The port has handled over 1.012 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) within just nine months of commencing commercial operations, outperforming projections by more than threefold, the minister said.

"When operations began on December 3, 2024, the concession agreement had estimated that the port would handle around 300,000 containers in its first year. Instead, Vizhinjam has already tripled that figure and is now on track to process 1.3–1.4 million TEUs by December 2025. Such rapid scaling has stunned the global shipping industry, where only a handful of ports have exceeded installed capacity within their debut year," he added.

Vasavan went on to point out that in less than a year, over 460 ships have docked at Vizhinjam, including 27 ultra-large container vessels (ULCVs) measuring nearly 400 meters.

"Notably, the port became the first in South Asia to berth the world's largest cargo vessel, MSC Irina. Another landmark achievement was handling 10,576 containers from a single vessel, MSC Paloma, setting a new Indian record," he said.

"The port's success is attributed to efficient operations by Adani Vizhinjam Port, robust support from the Kerala government, cooperation from local fishing communities, and strong collaboration with shipping lines," he added.

Equipped with 24 automated yard cranes and 8 semi-automated ship-to-shore cranes, Vizhinjam is also South Asia's first automated container port.

Women operators from the local community are among those steering these advanced systems, reflecting a blend of cutting-edge technology and inclusive workforce participation.

Strategic connectivity has amplified Vizhinjam's momentum.

The port now offers direct services to Europe, the US, Africa, and China, reducing India's dependence on foreign transshipment hubs such as Colombo, Dubai, and Singapore.

"This shift is expected to save the Indian economy crores in additional logistics costs, while boosting Kerala's position on the global trade map," said Vasavan.

Road and rail links to Vizhinjam are progressing on schedule, promising seamless hinterland connectivity. With its strong start, Vizhinjam has become a benchmark for India's maritime future, transforming Kerala into a critical gateway for international trade.

## Kolkata Port to develop Hooghly riverbanks, build terminal for cruise ship



Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port-Kolkata is collaborating with IIT-Kharagpur to revitalize the Hooghly riverbanks and ghats, aiming to boost tourism. A master plan is underway to establish a river cruise terminal, similar to those in Varanasi and Assam.

In order to start a river cruise, we need a world-class river cruise terminal...We are building a river cruise terminal in Bengal with the help of the Inland





## Vizag Port Emerges as India's Top Seafood Export Hub



**Visakhapatnam, Aug 28 (KNN)** Visakhapatnam Port has reinforced its position as India's leading gateway for seafood exports, accounting for nearly 30 per cent of the country's marine product shipments in FY24.

According to the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), seafood exports through Vizag Port stood at USD 2.19 billion out of India's total USD 7.38 billion. Despite global trade challenges, India's seafood exports rose marginally to USD 7.45 billion in FY25, though volumes fell from 17.8 lakh tonnes in FY24 to 16.9 lakh tonnes.

Frozen shrimp remained the mainstay, contributing USD 5.17 billion or nearly 70 per cent of total earnings. Other key products included frozen fish (USD 622.6 million) and frozen squid (USD 367.7 million).

The US remained India's biggest market with imports worth USD 2.71 billion, followed by China (USD 1.27 billion) and the European Union (USD 1.12 billion). Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Middle East also remained strong destinations. Vizag Port's success is backed by world-class facilities such as cold storages, reefer container capacity, and seamless rail-road connectivity, which ensure faster movement of temperature-sensitive cargo.

The Visakha Container Terminal, with a capacity of 6 lakh TEUs and 650 reefer sockets, allows efficient handling of large vessels and uninterrupted power for refrigerated containers. Around 17 seafood processing plants and 10 hatcheries operate near the port, enabling exporters like Nekkanti Sea Foods, Devi Sea Foods, and Coastal Exporters to maintain quality and meet global demand.

This ecosystem, combined with modern mechanized loading, digital cargo tracking, and sustainability initiatives, strengthens Vizag's role as India's seafood hub.

With India targeting USD 14 billion in seafood exports by 2030, particularly in value-added products, Vizag Port is expected to remain at the centre of this growth. Government support for deep-sea fishing, feed subsidies, and export-friendly policies is likely to further boost the sector's prospects. (Source: **KNN Bureau**)

# India's Foreign Trade

## Odisha lemons exported to United Kingdom for first time

Farmers in Chendipada of Odisha's Angul district have exported lemons to the United Kingdom for the first time. Around 500 acres (202 hectares) in the region are under lemon cultivation, where the crop is considered an agricultural lifeline.

Until now, farmers faced difficulties due to the absence of proper marketing facilities. They sold lemons for Rs20 to Rs30 per hundred fruits (US\$0.24–0.36), often below labour costs, with many fruits left to rot.

With support from the Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society (ORMAS) and the Kopi Fry Farm Producer Company, lemons were exported this month after being selected, graded, and packed. Only fruit above 30 grams was included. Farmers received over Rs 120 per hundred fruits (US\$1.44), nearly four times higher than previous prices. From Chendipada alone, more than 100,000 lemons were shipped in three batches, with growing demand reported.

Tuani Sahu, a farmer, said: "We feel we have lost precious years in just selling at rates far below the market rate. Now, at least we know our fruit can help us sustain us in months when we do not have any other crops to cultivate. We are all happy to have received a demand from countries abroad, and now we will pay more attention to growing and reaping lemons."

Another grower, Gitanjali Pradhan, noted: "We used to leave a lot of lemons in the tree as we did not have a market. Those lemons would fall down and rot. Now it is precious for us. It is like winning over years-long war and struggle. At least we will give importance to our lemon orchards now on."

After grading and packing, surplus lemons are sent to cold storage and later distributed to women's groups through ORMAS for value-added products such as pickles and juices.

The climate of Angul district is suitable for lemon cultivation, with areas near forests less favourable for crops such as paddy and sugarcane due to wild animal raids. "But lemon is never liked by the animals and remains as it is on the trees. Even the soil is conducive for growing lemons, and not much hard work goes into it," said farmer Bipin Sahu.

Deputy CEO of ORMAS, Bimal Mall, said only the Chhendipada block has been included this year, with plans to expand to more villages in 2026. Kopi Fry Farm Producer Company CEO Satyajit Jena added that farmer awareness is essential to ensure high-grade produce for export.

India produces around 3.8 million tons of lemons and limes, about 18% of global output. Lemon production is projected to surpass 4 million tons by 2026. Andhra Pradesh leads Indian lemon production with 1.1 lakh acres, followed by Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu. India is the third-largest exporter worldwide, after Turkey and South Africa, with over 21,000 shipments annually. Source: [ETV Bharat](#)



## **U.S. imposes additional 25% tariffs on Indian exports**

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has raised concern over the U.S. government's decision to impose an additional 25% tariff on Indian-origin goods, raising total duties on many export categories to as high as 50%. The tariff hike, effective from August 27, 2025, is expected to severely disrupt the flow of Indian goods to the U.S., which remains India's largest export market.

FIEO President S. C. Ralhan described the development as a major setback, noting that approximately 55% of India's exports to the U.S., valued at around US\$47–48 billion, will now face a pricing disadvantage of 30–35%, making them uncompetitive compared to exports from China, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, and other Asian countries.

Textiles and apparel manufacturers in hubs such as Tirupur, Noida, and Surat have already halted production as rising costs erode competitiveness. The sector is losing ground to lower-cost suppliers from Vietnam and Bangladesh. In seafood, particularly shrimp, where the U.S. absorbs nearly 40% of India's exports, the tariff increase threatens to create stockpile losses, supply chain disruptions, and farmer distress.

Other labour-intensive sectors, including leather, ceramics, chemicals, handicrafts, and carpets, are also expected to face declining competitiveness, especially against European, Southeast Asian, and Mexican producers. According to Ralhan, delays, order cancellations, and lost cost advantages could worsen the impact across these industries.

FIEO has urged immediate government support to help exporters withstand the shock. Key measures requested include interest subvention schemes, enhanced export credit support, and access to low-cost credit, with an emphasis on MSMEs. Ralhan also called for a moratorium of up to one year on loan repayments of both principal and interest, along with automatic enhancement of credit limits by 30% and collateral-free lending under frameworks similar to the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).

He further proposed expanding Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, strengthening infrastructure, investing in cold-chain and storage facilities, and accelerating free trade agreements (FTAs) with the EU, Oman, Chile, Peru, GCC countries, Africa, and Latin America, with early-harvest provisions for labour-intensive sectors. Diplomatic engagement with the U.S. remains critical, he added.

FIEO also highlighted the need for stronger global branding of Indian products, wider adoption of quality certifications, and greater focus on innovation to enhance competitiveness in global markets.

The organisation appealed for coordinated action between exporters, industry bodies, and government agencies to safeguard livelihoods, reinforce trade links, and mitigate the challenges posed by the new tariff regime.

(Source: **Federation of Indian Export Organisations:**

## **India extends import duty exemption on cotton till Dec 31 as 50% US tariffs come into effect**

The import duty exemption on cotton has been a long-standing demand of the Indian industry, but the government has maintained an 11 %duty largely to protect small cotton farmers.



A day after steep 50 per cent US tariffs came into effect that has raised concerns of job losses in the textile industry, the Finance Ministry on Thursday extended the exemption on cotton import duty till December 31, a move that would help the Indian textile industry place long-term cotton import orders. The move comes after manufacturers flagged that the duty exemption given till September 30 was too short a window to place fresh orders and would only help in-transit shipments.

"To augment the availability of cotton for the Indian textile sector, the Central Government had temporarily exempted the import duty on cotton from 19 August 2025 till 30 September 2025. In order to support exporters further, the Central Government has decided to extend the import duty exemption on cotton (HS 5201) from 30 September 2025 till 31 December 2025," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

The import duty exemption on cotton has been a long-standing demand of the Indian industry, but the government has maintained an 11 per cent duty largely to protect small cotton farmers. Notably, cotton was among the four items that saw the sharpest increase in [Minimum Support Price \(MSP\)](#) by the government in May this year as cotton production has been declining over the years.

"However, we are of the firm belief that India's principled and measured stand will ultimately benefit our nation's economic interests in the long term. Your government's commitment to safeguarding the nation's progress and self-reliance is commendable. Our industry is already experiencing the effects of the tariff hike, with potential losses and order cancellations. We are exploring alternate markets and strategies to mitigate the impact of the US tariffs. We are also in active discussions with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and have been assured of their best possible support," the letter read.

**Compiled by Dr.Sham Choughule through various sources for private circulation  
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