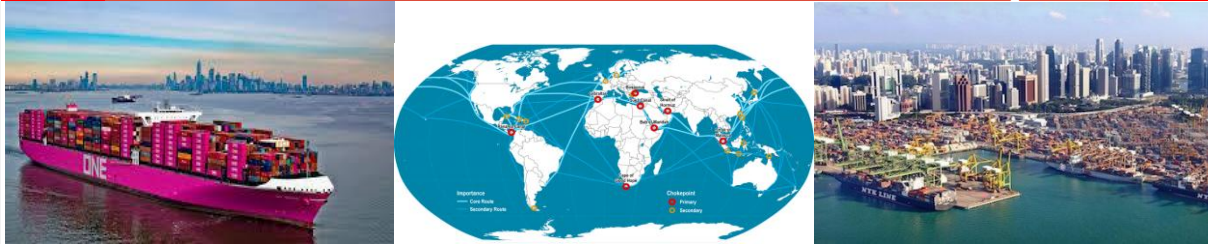


## Indian Maritime News Express

Date:20th Feb 26

Mumbai-India

### International Maritime Trade & Transport



### India Detains Container Ship Over Suspected Origin Misdeclaration



File Photo

Indian customs authorities have detained a Comoros-flagged vessel at Mumbai's Nhava Sheva Port after suspecting misdeclaration of the origin of nearly 310 containers of dried fruit consignments.

The ship, identified as WIV Reyfa, was held following specific information received by the Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) regarding possible discrepancies in the declared source of the cargo.

The consignments were loaded at Bandar Abbas port in Iran but were reported. Officials suspect the goods were misdeclared in order to claim benefits under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement, falsely declared as originating from Afghanistan.

Under SAFTA, imports from Afghanistan attract no or negligible customs duty, whereas goods from Iran are subject to full duty.

The vessel has been under detention for nearly a fortnight. Indian authorities are questioning members of the crew to obtain further details about the consignments.



Chinese walnuts in the guise of Afghan in dry fruit container ship detained by Indian C...

Although import documents state that all containers were loaded at Bandar Abbas, as Afghanistan does not have its own port, investigators are examining whether the country of origin stated for the dried fruits, particularly walnuts, was incorrect. A circular issued on 16 February by the Central Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Customs Department stated that one person has been arrested in connection with the case.

According to the circular, the investigation so far has revealed an attempted duty evasion of approximately ₹50 crore.

Officials believe the walnuts on board were declared as being of Afghan origin, but preliminary findings indicate they may not have originated from Afghanistan. The investigation is ongoing.

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## Indian Maritime Sector

### CMA CGM finalises landmark Indian container ship order



In the presence of Shri Shantanu Thakur – Minister of State at the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, and the CMA CGM Group’s Chairman and CEO Rodolphe Saadé, the Group reinforced its long-term commitment to India during a high-level gathering in New Delhi. The event underscored the Group’s continued partnership with India’s maritime sector and its ambition to support the country’s growing role in global trade and logistics.

**Deepening Strategic Maritime Partnerships in India in the presence of the Group’s top leadership:**

During the visit of its global leadership in India, CMA CGM signed the final Shipbuilding Contract with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) for six state-of-the-art LNG-powered container ships of 1700-teu capacity. In parallel, CMA CGM is deeply committed to human capital development in India. Through CMA SHIPS, the Group has already recruited 1,000 Indian seafarers, with plans to onboard 1,500 seafarers by the end of 2026, further strengthening Group’s role in the global maritime workforce.

Building on this strategic milestone, the CMA CGM Group is actively exploring opportunities to partner with key stakeholders across India on initiatives designed to strengthen the country’s container manufacturing capabilities, promote sustainable ship recycling and support the development of domestic container shipping.

**Driving Innovation Across the Global Supply Chain**

On the occasion of its participation to the Indian AI summit, CMA CGM will develop its innovation presence in India to actively leverage artificial intelligence, digital solutions, and advanced analytics to transform the entire supply chain, from maritime operations and port efficiency to logistics optimization and customer experience.

As part of this commitment, in partnership with Capgemini, CMA CGM has established a dedicated Research & Development (R&D) hub in India, positioning the country as a key global center for innovation within the Group. The India R&D hub plays a critical role in developing next-generation digital and AI-enabled solutions that support CMA CGM's worldwide operations (**Source: Sea Trade Marine News**)

## Iran-linked oil tanker seized by India went dark after entering Pak



MT Asphalt Star, one of the three Iran-linked tankers seized near Mumbai, was detected operating suspiciously in Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). On January 28, the tanker went completely "dark" for about 11 hours, disabling its Automatic Identification System, Very High Frequency radio and onboard sensors, while concealing its identity.

One of the [three US-sanctioned, Iran-linked oil tankers seized by the Indian Coast Guard](#) earlier this month off Mumbai had spent days inside Pakistan's maritime boundary with its tracking systems switched off, according to an FIR accessed by India Today TV. The vessel, MT Asphalt Star, was detected operating suspiciously in Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) between January 20 and January 28.



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## Indian Port Sector

### 2nd cruise vessel of the season calls at New Mangalore Port



**Mangaluru, Feb 19:** New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA) welcomed the second cruise vessel of the current season, MS Island Sky, on Thursday, February 19. The vessel, sailing under the Bahamas flag and managed by Salen Shipmanagement AB, arrived at the port at 7:30 am from Mormugao.

The cruise ship arrived with 95 passengers and 70 crew members, who were greeted with a warm traditional welcome at the port's cruise terminal. Extensive preparations were made by NMPA and stakeholders to ensure a seamless experience for the visiting tourists.

Additional features for the passengers included a meditation centre set up by the ministry of AYUSH, free Wi-Fi provided by NMPA, and a selfie stand depicting Mangaluru's Yakshagana art form installed by the ministry of tourism.

During their stay, passengers undertook guided tours to prominent destinations in and around Mangaluru, including the Kudroli Gokarnath Temple, St Aloysius Chapel, local markets, and the Kalbavi cashew factory.

To ensure a smooth immigration process, NMPA undertook advanced planning and coordination, which significantly reduced waiting times. Following the successful port call, the vessel departed at 1:00 pm for its next destination.

The arrival of such vessels highlights the port's growing role in promoting cruise tourism and boosting the local economy. The NMPA remains committed to providing world-class infrastructure to strengthen the region's position as an emerging cruise tourism destination.

(Source: [aijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay](http://aijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay))

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## Hamburg delegation strengthens port and trade ties with India



As part of the official delegation visit by the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg to India, representatives of Hamburg's port and maritime industry focused on strengthening cooperation with partners in Chennai and Mumbai. In New Delhi, meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways and Invest India further reinforced bilateral relations. Against the backdrop of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and India, the delegation highlighted the importance of diversified trade relations and India's growing role as a trading partner.

The delegation was led by Hamburg's Senator for Economic Affairs, Labour and Innovation, Dr Melanie Leonhard. Participants included Jens Meier, CEO of Hamburg Port Authority and President of the International Association of Ports and Harbors, Hendrik Meyn, CEO of Port of Hamburg Marketing, and senior representatives of the maritime sector.

### **New volume record in throughput with India**

India is among the Port of Hamburg's key trading partners. From 2020 to 2024, direct container throughput with India increased by 21 per cent. Growth continued in 2025, with India ranking sixth among Hamburg's partner countries in seaborne container traffic by year-end.

The Port of Hamburg recorded a new volume record of 290,000 TEU in direct trade with India in 2025. This represents impressive growth of nearly 50 per cent compared to the previous year and clearly demonstrates the dynamic development of trade with the subcontinent. The delegation visit to India is a further building block intended to generate

additional momentum for cargo flows, investment and logistics partnerships," said Hendrik Meyn, CEO of Port of Hamburg Marketing.

The Port of Hamburg maintains twelve liner services with India: six container liner services, three RoRo services, and three conventional general cargo services, including heavy lift cargo. Direct connections exist with the ports of Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Mumbai, Chennai, Ennore, and Hazira.



### **V.O. Chidambaranar Port Registers 40.67% Growth in Limestone Cargo Handling**

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority, Tuticorin, has recorded a robust growth of 40.67% in limestone cargo handling during the period April–January 2025–26, compared to the corresponding period of April–January 2024–25, reflecting a significant surge in bulk cargo throughput.

The remarkable increase underscores the Port's enhanced operational efficiency, improved logistics coordination, and strengthened partnerships with key trade stakeholders. Limestone, a critical raw material for cement, steel, and other core industries, constitutes an important component of the Port's bulk cargo portfolio. The growth is attributed to streamlined cargo handling processes, optimized berth utilization, and faster vessel turnaround times, enabling the Port to cater effectively to rising industrial demand. (Source: *India Seatrade News*)



## Adani Ports signs pact with France's leading port Marseille Fos



Marseille is one of the oldest seaports in the country and its busiest oil port.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd signed an MoU with France's Port of Marseille Fos to expand cooperation in trade facilitation, port innovation and energy transition. The partnership proposes setting up an IMEC Ports Club to improve coordination among ports along the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor route and strengthen connectivity between India and the European Union.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) and the Port of Marseille Fos, France's leading port and the Mediterranean's premier gateway, on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to deepen cooperation on trade facilitation, port innovation, and energy transition.

This partnership proposes the creation of an IMEC Ports Club to strengthen coordination among key ports along the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) route, reinforcing connectivity between India and the European Union. This completes the IMEC pathway for India-EU trade, that has been boosted by the FTA between India and the EU

On the eastern gateway of IMEC, APSEZ's ports at Mundra and Hazira form a multimodal logistics hub connecting South Asia to West Asia. Through this MoU, Marseille Fos strengthens the western European gateway of the corridor, adding approximately 70 million tonnes of capacity and extending IMEC's reach deeper into Europe.

Marseille Fos is one of Europe's largest integrated multi modal port ecosystems. This partnership establishes a more structured and coordinated pathway to facilitate India-EU trade flows, said Adani Group in an exchange filing. (**Source: Economics Times**)



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# Indian Logistics Sector

India's next big power move is set to unfold in the Bay of Bengal



India's ambitious Great Nicobar infrastructure project has received a green light. This mega project, centered around a new transshipment port, aims to boost India's role in global shipping. It will reduce reliance on foreign ports and strengthen India's strategic presence near vital sea lanes

After getting delayed for years over environmental issues, the Centre's Rs 90,000-crore-plus Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project has been cleared by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). With this, India has crossed a crucial legal and regulatory milestone in what could become one of its most consequential maritime and geopolitical plays. By upholding the 2022 environmental clearance and also noting the strategic importance of the project, the NGT has effectively unlocked a long-planned vision of transforming **Great Nicobar Island into a major transshipment and logistics hub in the Bay of Bengal.**

At the heart of this vision lies the International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP) at Galathea Bay, an ambitious effort to recast India's role in global shipping, reduce its dependence on foreign ports, and anchor its strategic presence near one of the world's busiest sea lanes.



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# India's Foreign Trade

## India emerges principal gainer among leather exporters to EU: CareEdge

- *India's FY27 budget, along with the completion of the India-EU FTA and the recent cut in US import tariffs, collectively create a positive policy environment for India's leather industry, according to CareEdge Ratings.*
- *India emerges as the principal gainer, with tariffs falling sharply from around 17 per cent to nil in FY26, thereby enhancing its cost competitiveness and export potential, it observed.*

India's Union budget for fiscal 2026-27 (FY27), along with the completion of the India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the recent cut in US import tariffs, collectively create a positive policy environment for India's leather industry, according to CareEdge Ratings.

The budget's focus on streamlining import duties, reducing input costs, improving cost competitiveness and simplifying procedures is likely to boost cost efficiency and operational performance and flexibility, it noted. This will enhance Indian exporters' competitiveness in global markets.

Additionally, the India-EU FTA significantly improves market access and export competitiveness.

Given the industry's existing focus on finished footwear, leather goods, and garments, the improved trade environment strengthens its ability to scale exports, stabilise demand and deepen engagement with global buyers, enabling the Indian leather industry to capture a larger market share in the medium to long term, CareEdge Ratings remarked.

Together, these developments are expected to generate cost efficiencies, thereby improving profitability margins for the sector.

India emerges as the principal gainer, with tariffs falling sharply from around 17 per cent to nil in FY26, thereby enhancing its cost competitiveness and export potential, it observed.

The removal of these duties under the new agreement is expected to improve India's relative value proposition and drive a material expansion in demand, particularly from major European fashion houses in Italy, France and Germany, it added.

(Source: Fibre2Fashion News Desk (DS))

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

**Director**



**(International Business, Logistics, and Maritime Transport )**

[Shamc2001@yahoo.co.in](mailto:Shamc2001@yahoo.co.in)

**Association for Global Economic Development-India**

**Corporate Office: A/111, Mittal Court, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021.**

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