

BCBA INDIA LOGISTICS CONCLAVE 2026

Inaugural Session

Address by Shri Sushil Khopde, IPS

Additional Director General of Shipping

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Distinguished Guests,
Senior Officers from Customs and Government Departments,
Representatives of Ports, Shipping Lines, Customs Brokers, Logistics
Service Providers, Members of the Trade Community,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a privilege to be present at the BCBA India Logistics Conclave 2026 and to address this distinguished gathering assembled under the theme “One Fraternity, One Vision - Logistics Driving India Towards Viksit Bharat.”

At the outset, I congratulate the Brihanmumbai Custom Brokers’ Association for bringing together stakeholders from across the logistics ecosystem; Customs, ports, shipping, logistics service providers, and trade.

Logistic is a strategic enabler of economic growth, global competitiveness, and national development.

In simple terms, logistics represents the entire journey of goods, from production to consumption. If the economy were a living system, logistics would be its bloodstream, ensuring that every sector functions efficiently and in coordination.

Today, this sector supports **over 22 million jobs in India** and has achieved significant efficiency gains, with logistics costs now at around 7.97% of GDP, bringing us closer to global benchmarks.

This is not just a statistical achievement; it directly translates into lower costs, faster movement, and stronger competitiveness for India.

India today stands at an important stage of its economic journey. As one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, our aspiration of becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047 will depend significantly on the efficiency, resilience, and integration of our logistics systems.

In this journey, the maritime sector occupies a central position.

Nearly 90 percent of India's trade by volume and around 70 percent by value is carried through the maritime domain, making shipping the backbone of our external trade and economic connectivity.

In many ways, **what is least visible is often most critical.**

Every container that moves, every export that reaches global markets, and every essential import that comes into the country depends on the maritime sector.

At the same time, recent global developments have reminded us that logistics is not immune to disruption.

Geopolitical conflicts and tensions in recent times have had a direct impact on global trade routes. Shipping lines have been forced to reroute vessels, increasing distances, transit times, and costs.

To explain this simply –

When a key maritime route is disrupted, ships may have to travel thousands of additional miles.

This means higher fuel consumption, longer delivery times, and ultimately higher costs for businesses and consumers.

This evolving situation highlights that logistics today is not only about efficiency; it is equally about **resilience, adaptability, and preparedness.**

The Directorate General of Shipping now transitioning to Directorate General of Maritime Administration, functioning under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, serves as India's statutory maritime administration.

Our responsibilities extend across:

- Maritime safety and Emergency preparedness
- Seafarer welfare & Capacity Building
- Environmental Protection
- Liability and Compensation Frameworks
- Implementation of international maritime conventions

We also represent India at the International Maritime Organization, ensuring that our maritime policies remain aligned with global standards while advancing national interests.

Today, India's maritime landscape is undergoing a period of unprecedented transformation.

Under the Maritime India Vision 2030 and the broader Amrit Kaal 2047 agenda, substantial investments are being made in:

- Ship Building
- Port modernization
- Capacity expansion
- Multimodal connectivity
- Maritime infrastructure

Projects such as the VadHAVAN Port development and expansion of existing port capacities are not merely infrastructure projects; they are strategic steps towards positioning India as a global maritime and logistics hub.

Alongside physical infrastructure, digital transformation is reshaping the maritime and logistics ecosystem.

Initiatives such as:

- Maritime Single Window (MSW)
- Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)
- PM Gati Shakti

are simplifying processes and improving coordination.

In addition to these digital and infrastructure reforms, an important step has been introduced under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 to strengthen trade facilitation.

A key provision mandates full transparency of charges in Bills of Lading and other transport documents.

Under this provision:

All charges payable by exporters, importers, consignors, and consignees must be clearly disclosed upfront

No hidden or undisclosed charges can be levied subsequently

This reform is significant for the logistics ecosystem because it:

Enhances predictability of logistics costs

Reduces commercial disputes between stakeholders

Improves supply chain planning and reliability

Promotes fair and transparent competition

For the trade community, this brings clarity, confidence, and trust into the system.

Further, digital initiatives such as E-Samudra and the Maritime Single Window are simplifying compliance, improving coordination among

agencies, and making maritime logistics faster, more transparent, and business-friendly.

In parallel, the Directorate is also examining amendments to the Multimodal Transportation of Goods Act, 1993.

Stakeholder consultations are underway to modernize this legal framework, enabling seamless multimodal cargo movement across road, rail, and maritime systems in line with evolving global logistics requirements.

We are also leveraging technology for operational efficiency:

- Integrated Vessel Traffic Management Systems (iVTMS), developed IIT Madras – (NTCPWC) enable real-time monitoring of vessels, improving safety and reducing congestion is currently implemented across all major ports.
- Just-in-Time arrival systems ensure ships reach ports exactly when berths are available, reducing idle time, saving fuel, and improving turnaround efficiency.

These are not just technological interventions; they represent a shift towards smarter, faster, and more predictable logistics systems.

Equally important is the transition towards green and sustainable shipping.

The maritime sector is actively pursuing decarbonization through:

- Cleaner fuels
- Shore power systems

- Energy-efficient operations
- Sustainability frameworks

Because the future of logistics cannot be built only on speed and scale – it must also be built on sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The efficiency of trade movement depends not on any single stakeholder, but on the seamless interaction between all participants:

- Shipping lines
- Ports
- Customs authorities
- Customs brokers
- Transport operators
- Logistics service providers

Every reduction in dwell time...

every improvement in cargo visibility...

every simplification of procedures...

is the result of coordinated action across this entire ecosystem.

In this regard, the role played by customs brokers and logistics professionals is particularly significant.

You serve as a vital bridge between trade and regulatory systems.

Your work ensures that cargo moves efficiently, compliantly, and competitively through global supply chains.

As India continues its march towards becoming a major global manufacturing and trading economy, we must now focus on three key priorities:

- Integration – connecting every node in the logistics chain
- Resilience – preparing for global disruptions and uncertainties
- Collaboration – strengthening partnerships across all stakeholders

These will define the next phase of India's logistics transformation.

The theme of this Conclave – *“One Fraternity, One Vision”* – captures this spirit perfectly.

It reminds us that the success of India's logistics sector depends on:

- Collective effort
- Shared responsibility
- A common vision for national progress

I once again congratulate the Brihanmumbai Custom Brokers' Association for organizing this important Conclave and for providing a platform that encourages dialogue, cooperation, and knowledge sharing among all stakeholders.

On behalf of the Directorate General of Shipping, I convey my best wishes for the success of this Conclave and for the continued growth and prosperity of the entire logistics and maritime fraternity.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.