Sagarmanthan: The Great Oceans Dialogue 2026

Technical Session: The New Commodity Security: Food, Fuel, and Fertilisers

Message from Additional Director General of Maritime Administration

1200 - 1300 hours | Bay of Bengal Hall of the Taj Palace Hotel | October 8, 2026.

Friends, distinguished panellists, ladies and gentlemen,

Food, fuel and fertilisers are no longer merely commodities that move across oceans. They have become strategic assets that determine economic stability, food security, energy security and national resilience.

Recent events have demonstrated that commodity security can no longer be taken for granted. Geopolitical tensions, conflicts, climate events, export restrictions and disruptions to key maritime routes have shown how quickly disturbances at sea can translate into inflation, shortages, fiscal pressures and economic uncertainty ashore.

India's recent experience illustrates this reality. Our energy imports continued to meet national demand despite significant shifts in sourcing patterns and evolving geopolitical circumstances. The volumes remained stable, but routes, suppliers and risk calculations changed considerably. What this tells us is that resilience today is not merely about securing supplies; it is about ensuring flexibility, diversification and reliable maritime connectivity.

Yet there is another dimension that deserves equal attention.

Commodities do not move on their own. Behind every shipment of crude oil, LNG, grain or fertiliser is a ship. Behind every ship is a crew. And behind every crew is a family. The resilience of global supply chains ultimately rests on the professionalism, commitment and courage of seafarers.

As maritime routes become increasingly exposed to geopolitical tensions and security challenges, seafarers often find themselves on the frontline of global disruptions. They face the risks associated with conflict zones, piracy threats, vessel detentions, abandonment cases and prolonged separations from their families. Therefore, any discussion on commodity security must also include a discussion on maritime safety, human welfare and the protection of seafarers.

India's position on this issue is clear: the safety, security and welfare of seafarers are paramount.

Over the past few years, India has worked proactively to assist and repatriate more than 4,200 seafarers affected by conflicts, abandonments and crisis situations across the world. Despite these efforts, we have also witnessed the tragic loss of 23 seafarers, a

sobering reminder that disruptions to global trade carry a very real human cost. In each such case, we have worked closely with stakeholders to ensure that affected families receive the support, compensation and assistance to which they are entitled.

Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has consistently emphasized the importance of safe and secure maritime corridors and the welfare of seafarers in international discussions. As global dependence on maritime trade grows, the security of supply chains and the security of seafarers must remain inseparable objectives.

The challenge before us today is therefore broader than commodity logistics.

It is about balancing efficiency with resilience.

It is about ensuring that diversification does not simply create new dependencies.

It is about building maritime systems that can withstand geopolitical uncertainty while remaining affordable and sustainable.

And it is about strengthening international cooperation so that critical supply chains remain open, secure and reliable.

Commodity security is not only about the movement of goods. It is also about the security of the sea lanes, the resilience of maritime networks, and the safety of the people who keep global trade moving.

I look forward to hearing the perspectives of our distinguished panellists.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.