



The Association of
Shipping Interests in Calcutta
(Estd 1971)

PORTSIDE CALCUTTA

THE ASIC UPDATE

A Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Association of Shipping Interests in Calcutta (Estd 1971) | March 2026



STEERING THOUGHTS

Message from the President

Watching the Horizon: Opportunity and Uncertainty in Global Shipping

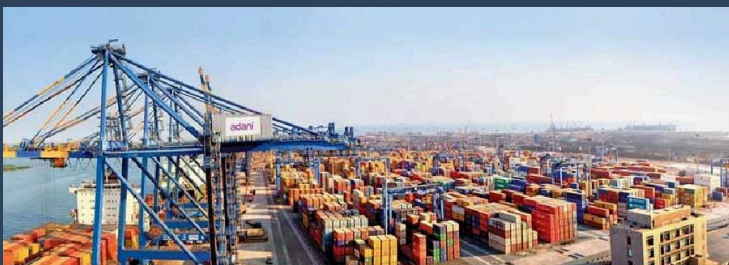
The global maritime industry has always navigated uncertain waters, but the present moment reminds us how closely shipping is tied to geopolitical stability. With tensions once again rising in parts of the Middle East, concerns about the safety of key sea lanes and the uninterrupted flow of energy supplies have understandably resurfaced. For an industry that carries nearly 90 percent of global trade, even a brief disruption in these corridors can ripple across freight markets, insurance costs, and supply chains worldwide.

At the same time, there are encouraging developments closer home. The Government of India continues to push forward with an ambitious maritime agenda - strengthening port infrastructure, promoting multimodal logistics, expanding inland waterways, and advancing the vision of Maritime India 2047. Initiatives in digitalisation, shipbuilding collaboration, and green logistics signal a sector preparing confidently for the future.

Yet, as history has often shown, progress in shipping rarely unfolds in calm seas alone. Global uncertainties - from regional conflicts to supply-chain disruptions - can quickly cast shadows over otherwise positive momentum.

For the maritime community, the task remains unchanged: to remain vigilant, resilient, and cooperative. Shipping has long been a stabilising force in international trade, and with prudent policy, industry collaboration, and steady leadership, it will continue to steer through these difficult currents.

Warm regards,
Ashok Janakiram
President, ASIC



Prime Minister Visits India AI Impact Summit 2026:

MoES Highlights AI for the Blue Economy



At the India AI Impact Summit 2026, attended by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) presented a forward-looking framework on the application of Artificial Intelligence in strengthening India's Blue Economy architecture. The Prime Minister's visit underscored the strategic importance of AI as a national development multiplier, particularly in ocean governance and marine resource management.

During its high-level session, MoES outlined how AI-driven modelling, ocean observation systems, and predictive analytics can enhance coastal resilience, optimise marine resource utilisation, and improve early warning mechanisms for extreme weather events. AI applications in fisheries forecasting, ocean health monitoring, and climate-linked maritime risk assessment were emphasised as transformative tools for sustainable economic expansion.

(Cover Story Contd.)

Contents:

Prime Minister Visits India AI Impact Summit 2026 **01-02** |
India–Australia Trade Deal Set to Boost Maritime & EXIM Traffic **02** |
Bravo Zulu! **03** | Haldia Eastern Gateway In Transition **04-05** |
Global Maritime Order **06** | Security, Stability & Human Dimension **07** |
Budget 2026-27 Partially Fulfills Targeted Customs Duty Cuts **07** |
Infrastructure Momentum & Sustainability Trajectories **08** |
January 2011 Setting up the Kolkata Indenture Memorial **09** |
"Calcutta se chhuttal jahaj ho" **10** | Who were they? And who are we? **10** |
An Ode to Courage **11** | Editorial Note **12**



The Association of Shipping Interests in Calcutta (Estd 1971)

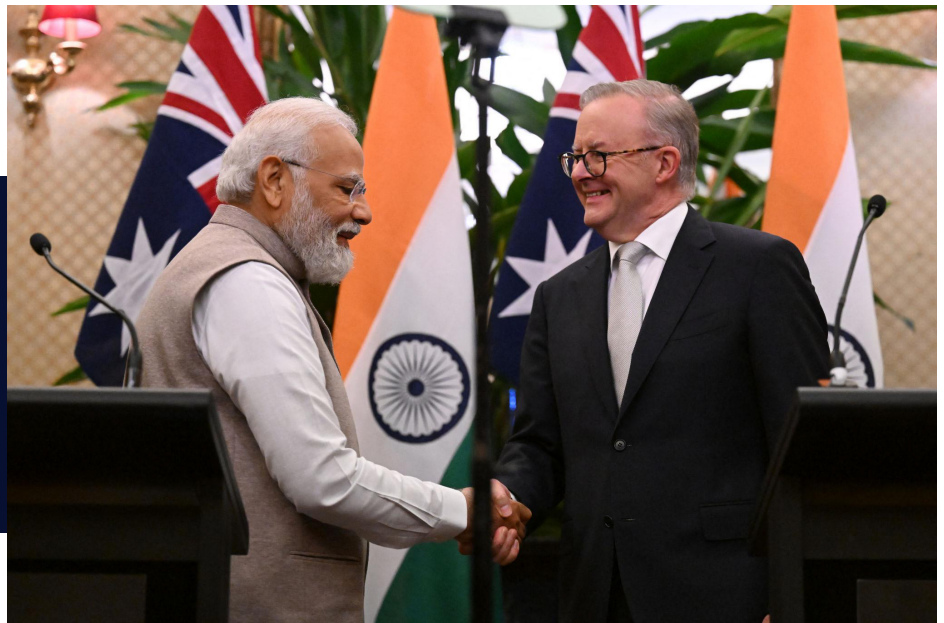
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The presentation also linked AI integration to operational domains such as shipping route optimisation, port planning support, and marine environmental compliance - areas directly relevant to India's expanding maritime ambitions.

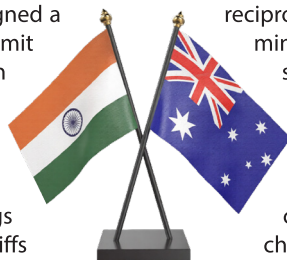
By foregrounding AI-enabled ocean intelligence, MoES positioned technology not merely as innovation, but as strategic infrastructure for maritime governance. The Prime Minister's presence at the summit reinforced the message that digital capability and ocean policy are increasingly interconnected pillars of India's long-term economic and geopolitical trajectory.



India–Australia Trade Deal Set to Boost Maritime & EXIM Traffic



On 15 February 2025, India and Australia formally signed a major trade agreement during the bilateral summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, aimed at significantly expanding commerce and supply-chain cooperation.



For the maritime and EXIM sectors, this pact brings tangible benefits. Australia has agreed to reduce tariffs on a wide range of Indian manufactured exports, including engineering goods, textiles, and pharmaceuticals - key categories moving through containerised shipping. India has

reciprocated with tariff cuts on Australian coal, critical minerals, agri-commodities, and bulk imports, strengthening demand for bulk carriers and energy-linked cargo shipments.

Ports and logistics operators on both sides are now preparing for increased cargo volumes, streamlined customs procedures, and deeper integration of supply chains across the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific region. The deal is expected to enhance two-way maritime traffic, support liner services, and unlock new opportunities for trade infrastructure investment.

Debt : Public News Domain



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BRAVO ZULU!

Paradip Port Authority Wins Swachhata Pakhwada First Prize

Paradip Port Authority secured **First Prize at the Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025**, presented by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways in New Delhi (February 2026). The recognition highlights exemplary performance in cleanliness, sanitation management and community participation during the national campaign.



Deendayal Port Authority Receives Maritime Excellence Award

At **India Maritime Week 2025**, Deendayal Port Authority was honoured with the **Maritime Excellence Achievers Award** for innovation in port operations and logistics optimisation. The award underscores advancements in throughput efficiency, infrastructure strengthening and stakeholder coordination.



Debt : India Sea Trade News

VOC Port Authority Conferred Green Visionary Award

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority received the **Green Visionary Award** during India Maritime Week 2025 for leadership in renewable integration, energy efficiency and eco-friendly port practices. The award reflects continued emphasis on decarbonised port operations aligned with national sustainability goals.



IMW 2025: VOC PORT CHAMPIONS GREEN INNOVATION

Debt : Indian Chemical News



Debt : NBMCW



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HALDIA

Eastern Gateway In Transition

Momentum and Operational Consolidation



Haldia Dock Complex continues to demonstrate steady container expansion, registering one of its strongest performance cycles in recent quarters. Growth reflects improved berth productivity, tighter yard management, coordinated vessel planning, and enhanced evacuation discipline. The increase in throughput signals more than volume growth - it reflects institutional consolidation. Exporters across eastern and northeastern India benefit from improved schedule reliability and reduced dwell time, strengthening confidence in Haldia as a stable maritime origin-destination node.

In a competitive port landscape, operational consistency becomes strategic capital.

Sustained container growth underscores structural strengthening.

Operational discipline enhances eastern export reliability.

Debt : India Shipping News

Infrastructure Modernisation and Bulk Handling Reform :

Mechanised bulk systems to improve discharge precision



The mechanisation of Berth No. 5 under a ₹343.58 crore PPP framework marks a decisive upgrade in dry bulk operations. Designed for nearly 5 million MT annually, conveyor-based discharge systems will reduce turnaround time and enhance safety standards.

Mechanisation represents structural modernisation - aligning efficiency with industrial demand across coal, limestone and raw material imports serving the eastern hinterland.

Efficiency reform strengthens long-term competitiveness.

Debt : The Economic Times (Infrastructure)

Digital Compliance to Streamline Export Gate:

Customs integration and documentation to enforce discipline

Enhanced Verified Gross Mass (VGM) compliance procedures have tightened synchronisation between exporters, shipping lines, terminal systems and Customs processes. Documentation alignment prior to "Cart-in Order" release improves gate predictability and safeguards vessel schedules.

In contemporary port ecosystems, digital compliance is operational infrastructure.

Accuracy reduces friction.

Debt : Maersk Advisory Circular



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Multimodal Synchronization and Hinterland Fluidity

River-rail coordination accelerates evacuation cycles

Port-rail coordination continues to strengthen cargo evacuation from Haldia's docks to inland industrial clusters. Reduced dwell time, faster rake movement, and improved berth availability collectively reinforce throughput resilience.

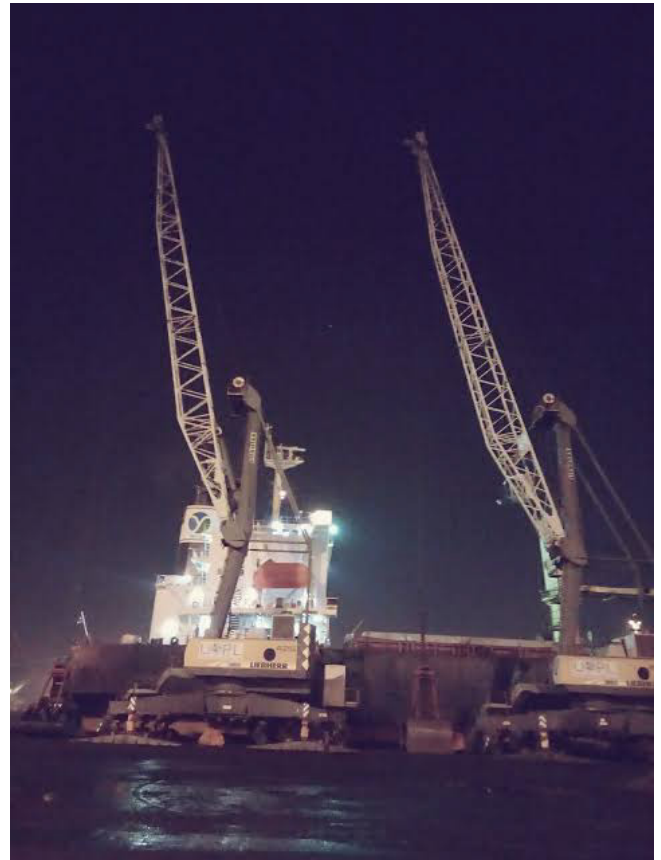
Connectivity extends beyond waterfront infrastructure - it is an integrated logistics ecosystem.

Fluid hinterlands sustain efficient ports.

Debt : India Sea Trade News

Maiden Service

The first train under the recently launched Container Train Service - YARN EXPRESS by CJ Darcl Logistics Limited, connecting Ludhiana (Punjab) with Haldia (West Bengal) has been received at Haldia Dock Complex on 05.03.26. The train under this service departed from ICD Ghungrana, Ahmedgarh (Ludhiana) on 28th February 2026. The containers will be loaded on the Chittagong feeder operated by CJ DARCL, soon.



CONTAINERS HANDLED - SMPA

KDS

April- Feb (2025-26)- 599161
April- Feb (2024-25)- 540743

HDC

April - Feb (2025-26)- 201083
April - Feb (2024-25) - 164440

TOTAL

SMPA: April - Feb (2025-26) 800244
April - Feb (2024-25) 705183



* On 26.02.2026, Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) has created history by crossing 2 Lakh TEUs in FY 2025-26 - for the first time since its inception in 1977.

Information courtesy : Goutam Gupta , Traffic Adviser , HDC



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GLOBAL MARITIME ORDER: WAR CLOUDS, TRADE & TRANSITIONS

Freight Market Recalibration and Capacity Realignment : Capacity discipline shapes 2026 outlook

Until the Iran crisis loomed large, the container shipping industry entered 2026 amid visible recalibration. Stabilisation of disrupted routes combined with fleet expansion is expected to exert downward pressure on freight rates. Capacity growth continues to outpace demand recovery, indicating structural softness. Carriers face margin compression; exporters may gain cost relief. Discipline in deployment becomes decisive. Correction, not crisis, defines the cycle.

Debt : Gulf News (Freight Analysis)

Consolidation and Strategic Scale Strategic consolidation drives operational optimisation

Industry consolidation continues as operators pursue scale, alliance optimisation and capital efficiency. Strategic mergers reflect long-term restructuring rather than short-term manoeuvre. Shipping scale delivers leverage - but also geopolitical sensitivity. Efficiency and responsibility advance together.

Debt : MarketWatch (Industry Report)

Black Sea Corridor: Trade resilience tested by geopolitical tension

Maritime exports from the Black Sea region remain affected by geopolitical volatility. Despite disruptions, trade adaptation through alternative routing underscores logistical resilience. Sea lanes remain economic arteries - and strategic fault lines.

Debt : Reuters

Baltimore Port Reopens After Historic Salvage of M/V Dali

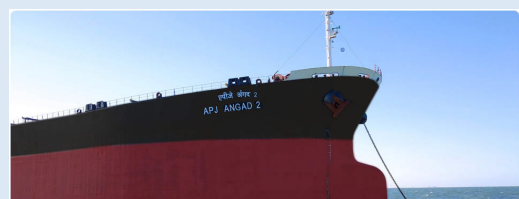


The Port of Baltimore has reopened to commercial traffic following the complex salvage operation of the container vessel M/V Dali, which was involved in an allision with the **Francis Scott Key Bridge** in March 2024. The allision caused the collapse of a major section of the bridge, blocking access to one of the United States' key East Coast ports. Salvage efforts, led by **Resolve Marine** in coordination with the **U.S. Coast Guard**, involved large-scale debris removal, heavy-lift crane operations, and controlled cutting to clear the navigation channel.

The reopening restores critical cargo movement at the **Port of Baltimore**, a major hub for automobiles and container traffic, marking a significant milestone in maritime emergency response and engineering resilience

Apeejay Shipping Inducts APJ Karan 2 to Boost Coastal Trade

Apeejay Shipping has strengthened its multipurpose fleet with the induction of APJ Karan 2, a 3,000-ton geared vessel designed for coastal and island trade operations. The vessel is fitted with two 60-ton cranes and can carry up to 243 TEUs, including 24 reefer containers. Its geared, multipurpose configuration enables efficient handling of both project cargo and containerised shipments, offering flexibility for niche and regional routes. With this addition, Apeejay Shipping reinforces its presence in the coastal and short-sea segment, aligning fleet expansion with evolving cargo patterns and operational requirements.





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SECURITY, STABILITY & HUMAN DIMENSION

Regional Maritime Cooperation and Strategic Assurance: Multinational exercises reinforce Indo-Pacific maritime stability



Recent multinational naval exercises across the Indo-Pacific have reinforced cooperative maritime security frameworks. Coordinated manoeuvres involving surface combatants, maritime patrol aircraft and logistics vessels enhance interoperability and strengthen maritime domain awareness across key trade corridors.

The Indo-Pacific carries a substantial proportion of global commercial shipping tonnage. Stability in these waters directly influences freight predictability, insurance premiums and routing decisions.

Naval diplomacy and commercial navigation are increasingly interlinked. Secure sea lanes are not abstract strategy - they are economic infrastructure.

Debt : Times of India



Cyber Vigilance and Expanding Digital Threat

The maritime industry's digital transformation has increased exposure to cyber risk. Reports over the past year have documented GPS spoofing incidents in sensitive waters, ransomware attacks targeting port operators, and data breaches affecting logistics platforms.

The convergence of IT and Operational Technology systems - including vessel management software, port community platforms and automated cargo handling - has delivered efficiency but expanded vulnerability. Regulators are increasingly incorporating cyber audit and resilience requirements into compliance regimes.

In the digital port ecosystem, data integrity is cargo integrity. Resilience planning now includes cyber defence alongside physical security.

Debt : Industry Research Reports

Budget 2026–27 Partially Fulfills Targeted Customs Duty Cuts

The Union Budget 2026–27 has introduced selective reductions in Customs duties, particularly on industrial raw materials and key inputs used by domestic manufacturers. The government has also simplified the duty structure by reducing the number of tax slabs, making compliance easier for importers.

India's average import tariff - previously about 15.77% (simple average) and 8.18% (weighted average) - is expected to ease slightly following these changes. Customs duties apply to merchandise imports exceeding \$700 billion annually, though they account for less than 4% of total government revenue.

The Budget also expands digital Customs processing and faster risk-based clearances to improve trade efficiency. While no broad amnesty scheme was introduced, measures were announced to reduce disputes and speed up assessments.

Overall, the reforms aim to lower input costs, address inverted duty structures, and improve ease of doing business while maintaining protection for sensitive sectors.



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INFRASTRUCTURE MOMENTUM & SUSTAINABILITY TRAJECTORIES



Ports Show Distributed National Growth

Cargo performance across multiple Indian ports in recent quarters reflects distributed national growth supported by mechanisation, automation and multimodal integration. Investments in deeper drafts, conveyor-based bulk systems, container yard automation and rail connectivity have collectively strengthened berth productivity and reduced turnaround time.

Government-led port modernisation initiatives, coupled with public-private investment models, continue to enhance evacuation capacity and hinterland integration. Balanced regional performance reduces systemic bottlenecks and improves trade resilience.

When growth is geographically distributed, logistics stability strengthens.

Port modernisation and multimodal integration reinforce national logistics resilience.

Debt : Public Port Reports



Decarbonisation and the Structural Shift toward Cleaner Maritime Systems

Energy transition reshapes maritime investment priorities and defines the next phase of port evolution.

The maritime sector continues advancing decarbonisation through alternative fuel trials, emissions reporting frameworks and green corridor initiatives. Global collaboration platforms are accelerating discussions on methanol readiness, LNG transition pathways, ammonia research and shore power integration at major terminals.

Though transition timelines remain gradual, regulatory alignment under IMO emissions targets and regional fuel standards is already shaping vessel design, retrofit decisions and port-side infrastructure investment.

Sustainability is shifting from policy aspiration to capital allocation priority. Future-ready ports will be evaluated not only by throughput - but by carbon intensity and environmental compliance.

Debt : Global Maritime Forum



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JANUARY 2011

Setting up the Kolkata Indenture Memorial



The abolition of slavery in the British Empire did not end the plantation system's demand for labour. The failed "apprenticeship" experiment after emancipation forced colonial planters to search urgently for new sources of workers. Early attempts to recruit labour from Europe and neighbouring Caribbean islands proved disastrous. Mortality was high, acclimatisation poor, and contractual arrangements unstable. These failures gradually turned imperial attention toward India, which would soon become the principal reservoir of labour for the sugar colonies of the nineteenth-century British world.

Indian indenture developed into a state-regulated migration system based on written contracts – "agreements" that emigrants signed, or more often sealed with a thumbprint, before departure. Over time, these contracts became standardised across the colonies. Most migrants originated in the united provinces and northern India and embarked from Calcutta, where a full-fledged Port was yet to come up. The Hooghly emerged as the most important gateway of the indentured

diaspora. Though ships sailed from Bengal's capital, Bengalis themselves were strikingly few among the migrants. From the river thousands departed for Mauritius, Natal, British Guiana, Fiji and the Caribbean, forming one of the largest organised migrations of the nineteenth century. The practice finally ended in January 1920, with 1st January declared as Deliverance Day. In Calcutta, the first Memorial was set up within the precincts of the Port on 11 January 2011 as an outcome of the relentless efforts of Sm Leela Gujadar Sarup and the GOPIO, with help from the Govt. of India.

*Generations nurtured from my seeds
will clasp their hands and say
our ancestors carved those fields
which have given us meanings
meanings to stand tall
our ancestors carved those fields
This land is ours too.*

-Guyanese poet Rooplall Monar



Prof Geraldine Forbes
speaking on Indenture
at the first International Seminar on
Immigration, organised at
The Memorial site
on 30.01.2020



Shri Vinit Kumar
Chairman Port, addressing the gathering



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“Calcutta se chhuttal jahaj ho...”



Dr Sarita Boodhoo

*Girmitiya Scholar, Former Chairperson,
Bhojpuri Speaking Union of Mauritius
and Recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya
Samman Award*

From 1963 to 1966, I lived in Calcutta as a student of Lady Brabourne College. At that time, I possessed only a hazy awareness of the vast historical amphitheatre of the Indentureship movement that connected India to Mauritius.

Returning to Mauritius in 1966 with a BA (Honours) in Geography from Calcutta University, I gradually awakened to the complexity of Mauritian society - multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic. This awakening led me to explore more deeply the history of Indenture Immigration.

The Aapravasi Ghat - originally the Immigration Depot and enlisted as a UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE in 2006, was the entry point of over five lakh Girmitiyas into Mauritius. In the 1970s, my uncle, Beekrumsing Ramlallah, reaffirmed its historical importance and popularised the name Coolie Ghat. Today, the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (BRIC) at Aapravasi Ghat honours his tireless campaign to secure recognition of the site as a historical monument.

“Calcutta se chhuttal jahaj...”

- the Bhojpuri reminiscences of departure sung by generations of Girmitiyas.

From childhood, the Aapravasi Ghat formed part of my lived memory. My uncle Beekrumsing Ramlallah would take us children on Sunday visits to historical sites in Port Louis. The former Immigration Depot - Coolie Ghat/Aapravasi Ghat - left an indelible imprint on my consciousness, reinforced by oral narratives handed down through generations about our “purvaz” - the Girmitiyas.

When Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, visited Mauritius in June 1970, the Coolie Ghat gained renewed visibility. At that time, however, the site lay abandoned with dilapidated buildings and wild vegetation. Shockingly, this vital link between India and Mauritius was not included in her official itinerary.

Beekrumsing Ramlallah fought tirelessly to ensure that the distinguished Prime Minister would visit the site. Petitions were submitted overnight, and volunteers cleared the encroaching vegetation.

Thus on 4 July 1970, I was honoured by my chacha, Beekrumsing Ramlallah, to light a large earthen lamp - a diya - at Coolie Ghat alongside Shrimati Indira Gandhi: she, the Prime Minister of the

land of our ancestors - Bharat Mata - and I, the great-granddaughter of those brave Girmitiyas who crossed the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean and climbed the sixteen steps of Aapravasi Ghat to build a home away from home.

In 2008, I revisited Calcutta with Mrs Leela Gujadhur Sarup - businesswoman, historian and philanthropist. We undertook a study tour of the Kidderpore wharves guided by Shri Gautam Chakraborti, former Security and Heritage Adviser to the Kolkata Port. He pointed out the archival relevance of a mooring point called 8 moorings long before the Port was formally established and how such moorings and anchorages played vital roles in transportation of immigrants in those days. We took it up from here and Mrs Sarup pursued with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India who later supported the establishment of a Calcutta Memorial. The relentless efforts of Ambassador Malay Mishra, Mrs Leela Gujadhur Sarup and Mr Ashook Kumar Ramsaran of GOPIO International, must be recalled.

On 11 January 2011, at the inauguration of the Calcutta Memorial - now known as the Indenture Memorial - I sang the Bhojpuri song “Calcutta se Chhuttal Jahaj,” recomposed from original Geet Gawai songs brought to Mauritius by Girmitiya geetharines and now recognised by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Indenture Memorial on the sacred Hooghly stands as a solemn tribute to our forefathers. It is therefore distressing that a bar and restaurant have been allowed to encroach upon this hallowed site. I have written to the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, requesting that the structure be converted into a Girmitiya Heritage Museum worthy of our ancestors’ memory.

Who were they? And who are we?



Kapil Kaul

*Honorary Consulate of the Republic of
Mauritius, Kolkata*

Families once torn apart by an exploitative system, seemingly destined to vanish into the dustbin of history. Yet history took another course. From hardship emerged resilience. The Girmitiyas rose, quite literally, like diamonds from dust - building new societies while never forgetting their roots.

Their journey is immortalised at Aapravasi Ghat in Port Louis, Mauritius - today a UNESCO World Heritage Site, standing on the bay of Trou Fanfaron. Once the landing place of indentured labourers, it now houses the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre, preserving the story of courage, displacement, and survival.

(Contd.)



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For many Mauritians of Indian descent, Calcutta remains a place of profound sentiment - the last threshold where their ancestors stepped from village life into the unknown world of indenture.

Stripped of caste and village identity, the migrants forged a new bond - the spirit of "Jahaji Bhai," the brotherhood of the ship. In distant plantations they carried seeds in their pockets and verses of the Ramayana and Hanuman Chalisa in their memory, proving that culture is not bound by geography but carried within. The Lesson they taught us is that that culture is not just about geography; it's a portable, internal flame.

The preservation of this heritage owes much to scholars such as Dr. Sarita Boodhoo, whose work transformed the Girmitiya narrative from one of suffering to one of epic resilience.

Perhaps it is now time to renew these civilisational links - to imagine the historic jahaji journey as a living circle between Kolkata and Port Louis, a continuing pilgrimage of memory.

An Ode to Courage ! Kidderpore, Kolkata Gateway of the Girmitiya Journey



Bhavna Sarup

Standing near Jetty 8 at Kidderpore are two monuments that quietly watch the Hooghly. One is a clock tower built in 1899, once used to keep time for ships navigating the river. The other is a gleaming marble structure - the Kolkata Indenture Memorial.

Enconced between its four pillars is the Kolkata Memorial Plaque, unveiled on 11 January 2011 by the then Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Hon. Vayalar Ravi. The monument honours the girmitiyas, the men and women who left India under the Indentured Labour System and whose journeys reshaped societies across the world.

This memorial is above all a tribute to courage. These were labourers who left behind their homes, families, and familiar worlds to embark on a voyage across the dreaded kala pani. They sailed from the ghats of Kolkata toward distant colonies in search of survival and hope. In doing so, they transformed the economic and social landscapes of lands far from India.

From these shores they once set forth into the unknown - and to these shores their children now return in reverence.
The system began as what the British called the "Great Experiment." On 10 September 1834, thirty-six contracted labourers departed from the ghats of Kidderpore aboard

the British ship Atlas. Nearly two months later, on 2 November 1834, the vessel reached Port Louis, Mauritius, the first receiving colony for Indian indentured labourers.

Over time, this movement grew into a vast human migration. Between 1834 and 1920, nearly 500,000 Indians were transported to Mauritius alone, while the wider indenture system carried about 1.2 million Indians across oceans to plantations and settlements in distant colonies.



(Late) Dr Leela Sarup at the Kolkata Memorial by the Hooghly river

In 1849, a complex at Trou Fanfaron in Port Louis was converted into the Immigration Depot to receive arriving migrants. The fourteen stone steps of that depot became the symbolic gateway to a new life. Today the site is known as Aapravasi Ghat, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where immigrants were registered before being sent to sugar estates across the island.

The creation of the Kolkata Indenture Memorial owes much to the vision of Dr. Leela Gujadhur Sarup, who believed that the Motherland must recognise the courage of these migrants. Her initiative brought together many who shared this vision - Ambassador Malay Mishra, Dr. Didar Singh, the then Union Minister of Railways Ms. Mamata Banerjee, Dr. Sarita Budhoo distinguished Girmitiya scholar and from the Port, Shri Gautam Chakraborti, who was also a Heritage researcher. Dr. Sarup received tireless support from many others from the diasporic community in realising the project.

Today, descendants of the girmitiyas return to the banks of the Hooghly to honour their ancestors. The memorial at Kidderpore stands as a reminder that from these shores they once set forth into the unknown - and to these shores their children return in reverence.



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From the Editor's Desk

When Turbulent Waters Mingle with Currents of Memory

At the very moment this issue of PortSide Calcutta calmly slides into the rolling press, disturbing news emerges from the Middle East. Reports indicate that the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most vital maritime arteries, is already under blockade conditions, with merchant vessels reportedly coming under fire in surrounding waters. For the global shipping community, such developments are more than distant headlines. They are reminders of how quickly geopolitical tensions can ripple through freight markets, insurance costs, and the supply chains that sustain international commerce.

Against this uncertain backdrop, India's maritime sector continues to move forward with steady determination. Infrastructure modernisation, multimodal integration, and regulatory reform are gradually strengthening the country's logistics framework. On the eastern seaboard, the ports of Kolkata and Haldia remain integral to this evolving maritime landscape, serving a vast hinterland and sustaining the distinctive riverine character of trade along the Hooghly.

In this issue, particular attention has been given to Haldia Dock Complex of the Port, whose recent operational consolidation and infrastructure modernisation have renewed interest in its role as a dependable eastern gateway for bulk and container traffic. Improvements in mechanised handling, digital compliance systems, and hinterland connectivity are gradually reinforcing operational confidence.

Developments in neighbouring Bangladesh, with a new administrative phase now taking shape, are also being watched with interest. Greater regional stability and cooperation hold promise for the continued growth of coastal shipping, feeder services, and riverine trade across the Bay of Bengal.

For Kolkata, however, the river carries meanings beyond commerce. From this waterfront began one of the most significant migrations of the nineteenth century. In 1834, the first indentured labourers departed from these ghats, marking the beginning of the great Indian diaspora. A memorial was established on 11 January 2011, and the first international seminar on the subject was held at its foot on 30 January 2020.

This issue remembers that history through contributions from those closely associated with that effort. The Hooghly flows past Kolkata and Haldia as it always has - sometimes turbulent, always moving forward - reminding us that maritime history is never still.

Gautam Chakrabarti
Hony Editor, PORTSIDE CALCUTTA

River Lighthouses on the Brahmaputra to Strengthen Inland Navigation

4 new river lighthouses to enhance safe navigation, strengthen inland waterways and boost cargo, cruise and ferry movement on National Waterway-2

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS



Projects & Locations

Bogibeel (Dibrugarh):

- Located on the South Bank
- Supports IWAJ cargo terminal movement
- Strengthens the Upper Assam navigation corridor

Pandu | Kamrup (Metro):

- Located on the South Bank
- Greenfield navigation aid
- Supports cruise and ferry operations

Silghat (Nagaon):

- Supports multimodal connectivity
- Located on the South Bank
- Facilitates cargo and passenger vessel movement
- Enhances the mid-river logistics ecosystem

Biswanath Ghat (Biswanath):

- Only North Bank lighthouse
- Greenfield navigation aid
- Supports cruise and ferry operations

Overall Benefits for People

- ✓ Safer 24x7 navigation on the Brahmaputra for cargo and passenger vessels
- ✓ Better connectivity for communities along the riverbanks
- ✓ Boost to local trade, tourism and river cruise activities
- ✓ Employment opportunities during construction and operations
- ✓ Faster and more reliable transport supporting regional economic growth in Assam

ShipminIndia | Shipmin_India | Sagarmala Project | sagarmala.gov.in / shipmin.gov.in



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We welcome your feedback and any news or article that you may wish to share or contribute. Please contact us at asiccom72@gmail.com

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