



The Association of
Shipping Interests in Calcutta
(Estd 1971)

PORTSIDE CALCUTTA

THE ASIC UPDATE

A Newsletter of the Association of Shipping Interests in Calcutta (Estd 1971) | June-August 2026



WEST BENGAL'S MARITIME RENAISSANCE



West Bengal
has the
geography,
the history,
and now the
will to become
eastern India's
maritime hub.
The Hooghly
must work for
Bengal again.

- Shri Suvendu Adhikari,
the 9th Hon'ble Chief Minister of
West Bengal, on taking over office.

Nabanna, 4 June 2026

Through the storm we reach the shore

**The New Chief Minister, Hon'ble Shri Suvendu Adhikari at the rudder of a ship named
West Bengal that badly needs to come ashore! ***

*AI-generated conceptual graphic based on the facial likeness in a reference photograph of the
Hon'ble Chief Minister, courtesy PRSIndia.org; published solely for editorial illustration.

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A River State Turns to the Sea



*Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal,
Union Minister of State, Shri Shantanu Thakur, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and
Waterways (MoPSW), with CM Shri Suvendu Adhikari*

West Bengal has always lived by its rivers. For the first time in a generation, it is governed by someone who also understands the sea.

The meeting at Nabanna on 4 June 2026 was a signal-clear and deliberate - that West Bengal is re-entering the national maritime mainstream after a decade of self-imposed distance. Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Shri Suvendu Adhikari and Union Shipping Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, laid out an agenda of a scale the State has not seen before: a deep-sea port, a water metro, 44 new jetties, Sagarmala 2.0, a dedicated Shipping Wing, and Rs.19,209 Crore, committed by the Centre by 2031.

Bengal's geography has always made the ambition logical. The Hooghly connects a vast hinterland to global sea lanes, and the Port of Kolkata is its natural gateway. What has been missing is political will. That gap now appears to be closing. ASIC welcomes this season without reservation - and will hold it to account with equal resolve.

Declarations are the beginning. The river, as always, will be the final judge

Bengal Charts a Maritime Future

*A new government,
a Rs.19,209 crore agenda, and
a State reawakened to the sea*

When Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Suvendu Adhikari - sworn in on 9 May 2026 as Bengal's first BJP Chief Minister - sat down with Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal at Nabanna, the conversation that followed was unlike any in the State's recent political memory. Ports, waterways, water metro, deep-sea access, shipbuilding, jetties and Gangasagar dominated the agenda.





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SAGARMALA 2.0 | INVESTMENT PIPELINE

Rs.19,209 Crore - Bengal Finally Joins the National Maritime Mainstream

The Centre has outlined a Rs 19,209 crore maritime growth agenda for West Bengal by 2031, covering SMPK upgrades, the Balagarh Multimodal Logistics Hub, inland waterways expansion, shipbuilding and ship repair upgrades, and port-led industrial clusters.

Over 62,500 direct and indirect jobs are expected.

West Bengal - which sat out Sagarmala 1.0 for political reasons - will prepare proposals worth Rs 22,700 Crore under Sagarmala 2.0 over five years.

ALSO ON THE AGENDA

- Dedicated Shipping Wing under Transport Department
- Development of minor ports
- Gangasagar Mela internationalisation
- Sagar Island development
- Kapil Muni Ashram development
- Six Ganga Ghats under renovation

Source: The Week / Swarajya Magazine / The Pamphlet



DEEP SEA PORT | DADANPATRABAR

Tajpur Out. Dadanpatrabar In.



DADANPATRABARR (Recreated impression)

The long-stalled deep-sea port project - burdened by land shortages at Tajpur - has been relocated to Dadanpatrabar, 10 km away in East Midnapore, where the state holds 1,700 acres of ready vested land.

CM Adhikari confirmed Adani Ports has exited the earlier project. The new site will be developed on a revenue-sharing model between Centre and state.

With a potential draft depth of 16 metres, Dadanpatrabar could handle cape-size vessels far beyond Haldia's current reach.

KEY FACTS

- 1,700 acres of vested land
- Draft depth: up to 16 metres
- Revenue-sharing model: Centre and state
- Previous Tajpur spend: Rs 30 crore - no result
- Adani Ports has formally exited

Source: Maritime Gateway / Millennium Post



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Message from the President

Fair Winds and a Following Sea

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This edition carries special meaning.

On 3 April 2026, ASIC completed 55 years since its founding on the banks of the Hooghly - 55 years of steering the maritime interests of Calcutta and the eastern seaboard through calm passages and heavy weather alike.

The association was born of a conviction that shipping deserved a strong, unified voice in this port city, and that conviction remains our compass today.

What a season it has been!

West Bengal's new government has, within weeks of taking office, unfurled a maritime agenda of genuine ambition - a deep-sea port at Dadanpatrabar, a water metro on the Hooghly, Sagarmala 2.0, 44 new jetties, and a dedicated shipping wing.

ASIC warmly welcomes each of these declarations and stands ready, as it always has, to be a constructive partner in their realisation.

Warm regards,

Ashok Janakiram
President, ASIC





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**PM with
Hooghly Boatman
Gouranga Biswas**

Debt : News18

From the Editor's Desk



When the Tide Turns

Every so often, the maritime world turns on its axis. Not in the gradual way of tides and seasons, but with the sudden decisiveness of a vessel changing course.

The June 2026 edition of *Portside Calcutta* arrives in one such moment - and this issue has tried, across sixteen pages, to capture it faithfully.

Globally, the signals are loud.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has exposed India's dependence on foreign-flagged vessels and foreign insurers.

The government's response - 62 new vessels, a \$5.4 billion fleet drive, a Rs.14,000 crore reinsurance backstop, and the rollback of cabotage exemptions - amounts to one of the most assertive maritime sovereignty initiatives in recent memory.

The container shipping order is also in motion. The dissolution of the 2M alliance, MSC's rise as the world's largest liner, and the Gemini Cooperation are reshaping global trade lanes.

Freight rates are correcting - not crashing.

The word of the moment is recalibration.

Closer to home, Bengal's maritime reawakening has dominated this issue.

A new Chief Minister.

A maritime agenda worth Rs.19,209 Crore.

A record year at SMP Kolkata.

A resurgent GRSE.

And a renewed focus on the Hooghly as Bengal's historic gateway to the sea.

ASIC has been the voice of the shipping community on the eastern seaboard for 55 years.

Our role is not to cheer from the stands, but to engage from the bridge - constructively, persistently, and always with the interests of our members and our port city at heart.

The next edition of *Portside Calcutta* is due in October 2026.

The seas between now and then may not be calm. They rarely are.

But it is precisely in such conditions that good seamanship proves its worth.

Gautam Chakrabarti

Hony Editor, PORTSIDE CALCUTTA



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ASIC Urges Strategic Push for West Bengal's Maritime Future

ASIC Submits Maritime Development Memorandum to State Government



Dr. Subrata Gupta
IAS, Adviser to the CM, WB

The Association of Shipping Interests in Calcutta (ASIC) has submitted a memorandum to Dr. Subrata Gupta, IAS (Retd.), Adviser to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, outlining a roadmap for strengthening the State's shipping, logistics, and maritime sectors.

The memorandum highlights West Bengal's strategic position as the natural maritime gateway to Eastern and North-Eastern India and proposes a series of policy initiatives to unlock the State's maritime potential. Key recommendations include the establishment of a West Bengal Maritime Board, adoption of a long-term river channel maintenance and dredging strategy, accelerated multimodal connectivity, development of port-led industrial clusters and logistics parks, and expansion of deep-draft port infrastructure.

ASIC has also called for greater industry participation in maritime policymaking, promotion of green shipping initiatives, investment in maritime skill development, and representation of the maritime community on the Board of Trustees of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata.

The Association reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the State Government to position West Bengal as a leading maritime, logistics, and commercial hub for South and Southeast Asia

WATER METRO | CITY #18

Kolkata Joins the National Water Metro Network

Kolkata will become the 18th Indian city to join the National Water Metro network, following Kochi's successful model.

The project will be developed under Sagarmala 2.0 with large-scale jetty development.

Seven existing ghats - including Baghbazar, Sovabazar, Babughat, Ahiritola, Mullick Ghat, Ramkrishna Ghat, and Bandha Ghat - are already under renovation.

Kolkata is expected to feature in the second phase of national rollout, after Guwahati, Srinagar, Patna, Varanasi, Ayodhya and Prayagraj.



Source: Metro Rail News





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Spotlight

LAUNCH | NAVAL MILESTONE

GRSE Launches

INS Sanghmitra

FIRST OF A NEW GENERATION OF PATROL VESSELS



Kolkata shipyard marks a landmark in indigenous warship production as the Navy scales up coastal and offshore capability. Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) launched its first Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV), Sanghmitra, at its Kolkata yard on 20 May 2026.

The launch was performed by Smt. Sarita Vatsayan in the presence of Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff. GRSE is building four of the 11 NGOPVs contracted across two yards - the remaining being built concurrently at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL). The class replaces ageing offshore patrol vessels and is designed for maritime policing, coastal presence and limited combat support. Deliveries are scheduled from September 2026.

GRSE'S BUSY SLATE - 2026

- Delivered INS Agray on 30 March 2026
- MoU with Hindustan Shipyard Ltd on 9 February 2026
- Third vessel keel laid for German export programme on 23 February 2026

EXPORT ORDERS | GERMANY

GRSE Builds for Germany:

12-Ship MPV Export Order on Track

GRSE is executing a landmark export order for 12 Multi-Purpose Vessels of the CORAL 7500 DWT series for German shipping firms including:

- Carsten Rehder
- F.H. Bertling
- ForestWave Navigation
- Delft Shipping

Each vessel is 120 metres long, 17 metres in beam and carries 7,500 MT of cargo.

This series represents GRSE's most significant commercial export programme to date.

GRSE Conferred Navratna Status

Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), one of India's leading defence shipyards, has been granted Navratna status by the Government of India. The prestigious recognition places GRSE among an elite group of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), enjoying enhanced financial and operational autonomy.

Headquartered in Kolkata, GRSE has played a pivotal and historic role in strengthening India's maritime and naval capabilities through the design and construction of warships, patrol vessels and specialised maritime platforms. The Navratna designation is a testament to the shipyard's consistent financial performance, technological excellence and strategic contribution to the nation's shipbuilding sector.

The elevation is expected to provide GRSE greater flexibility in investment and expansion decisions, further supporting its growth ambitions and reinforcing its position as a key pillar of India's maritime and defence ecosystem.



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BRAVO ZULU!

EASTERN SEABOARD | SMP KOLKATA, CLAIMS OF RECORD PERFORMANCE

SMP Kolkata Claims All-time Record with a Month to Spare

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMPK) has reportedly achieved a landmark: handling 64.026 MMT of cargo in just eleven months - April 2025 to February 2026 - surpassing the entire previous year's total of 63.951 MMT, with a full month still remaining in the financial year.

The Kolkata Dock System (KDS) registered 13.48% growth to 17.033 MMT, while the Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) handled 46.993 MMT, up from 42.697 MMT in the corresponding period last year.

Container traffic hit an all-time high: 8,74,360 TEUs - smashing the previous record of 8,44,762 TEUs set in FY 2019-20.



KEY FIGURES

- 64 MMT Cargo in 11 months
- 8.74 lakh TEUs
- 13.5% KDS growth
- 46.9 MMT HDC throughput

PARADIP PORT OUTSHINES!

EASTERN SEABOARD & PARADIP PORT & NATIONAL WATERWAYS PARADIP | RECORD YEAR

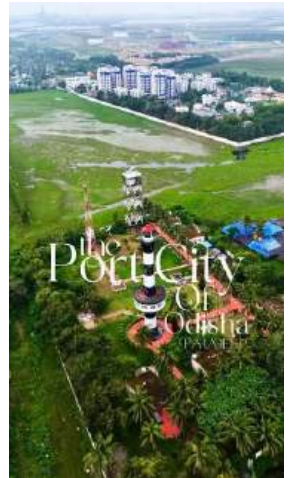
Paradip Port Handles 156 MT - Confirms Its Place as India's Eastern Anchor
Second-highest Performing Major Port in India in FY 2025-26

Paradip Port Authority handled 156.45 million tonnes in FY 2025-26, making it India's second-largest major port by cargo throughput, behind only Deendayal Port Authority. India's major ports collectively crossed 915 MT, exceeding annual targets with a 7.06% year-on-year rise.

Paradip's target for FY 2026-27 is capacity expansion to 300 MMTPA.

KEY FIGURES

- 156 MT throughput
- #2 major port ranking
- 915 MT major ports combined
- 300 MTPA target



INVESTMENT SURGE AHEAD?

Rs. 48,000 Crore in MoUs - Kolkata Port Bets Big on its Eastern Future

SMPK signed strategic MoUs worth over Rs.48,000 crore at India Maritime Week 2025 in Mumbai.

The Dredging Corporation of India was brought in as long-term dredging partner.

Container terminal capacity will expand through collaborations with Adani Ports, JSW Infrastructure, and Century Ports.

Capacity targets:

- HDC: 50 MMT → 75 MMT
- KDS Container Capacity: 0.65 million TEUs → 1 million TEUs

Source: Maritime Gateway



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BUSIER HORIZONS | FLEET EXPANSION

India Plans 62 New Vessels, Backs Fleet Drive with \$5.4 Billion

Minister Sonowal calls for urgent action as Iran conflict exposes India's maritime vulnerability

India's Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, has announced plans to add 62 new vessels to India's domestic fleet in FY 2026–27.

The programme is backed by an investment of \$5.4 billion.

The objective is to add 2.85 million gross tons to Indian-flag capacity.

Focus areas include:

- Container vessels
- LPG carriers
- Crude tankers
- Green tugs

alongside the Shipping Corporation of India's acquisition programme.

"We must act with urgency to strengthen our fleet, shipbuilding capacity, port infrastructure, and the broader maritime ecosystem."

— Sarbananda Sonowal

Current targets include:

- At least 20% of exports on Indian-flag ships
- Transshipment growth from 20% to 75% by 2030
- India becoming a top-five shipbuilding nation by 2047

Source: The Maritime Executive

CAPACITY BUILDING | FLAG TRANSFERS

CMA CGM Transfers Two More Containerships to Indian Registry

CMA CGM is transferring two additional containerships to the Indian registry:

- CMA CGM Vila do Conde
- CMA CGM Semarang

These become the fifth and sixth CMA CGM vessels moved under the programme that began in April 2025.

Maersk, MSC and Hapag-Lloyd are expected to follow with similar transfers.

Source: Economic Times / Directorate of Shipping





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INFRASTRUCTURE | HERITAGE



Historic Bascule Bridge Gets a Rs 117 Crore Overhaul

The Ministry of Ports has approved renovation of the iconic Bascule Bridge at Kolkata Dock System at an estimated cost of Rs.117.54 crore.

Sagarmala funding will contribute Rs.41 crore. Originally built by Waagner-Biro Bridge Systems AG nearly sixty years ago, the double-leaf Bascule Bridge will undergo comprehensive structural strengthening and electro-mechanical upgrades.

Implementation agency: Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)

A Parting Conversation

Ravi Shankar Rajhans

Traffic Manager KDS

*“I gave everything - and
received even more in return”*

Editor's Note

Ravi Shankar Rajhans retired on 31 May 2026 as Traffic Manager, Kolkata Dock System - closing 34 years of service.

He arrived in 1992 as a Management Trainee at Haldia.

He leaves having presided over some good years in cargo handling at KDS and receiving two Maritime Excellence Awards in 2025 for his department.

PORTSIDE CALCUTTA listens to a man attuned to rivers, railways and the people who keep trade moving.

The railway yard at Haldia, 1992.

Our own locomotives, our own track gangs - a world complete in itself.

For Ravi Shankar Rajhans, those formative years taught him the one skill that would define his career: the art of human relations.

“A port is not a collection of departments - it is a living system, and the real skill is in making that system breathe together.”

Taking charge at KDS in September 2021, he found a port still winded by COVID - freight rates sky-high, vessels scarce, Bangladeshi and Nepali transit traffic pressing against city roads, and a navigational channel shared between Kolkata and Haldia.

What he leaves is structurally a little different:

- PPP operators at Kidderpore and Netaji Subhas Dock
- Drive-through container scanners
- Functioning pre-gate system
- Possibility of the Balagarh Extended Gate

The latter could transform how cargo evacuates Kolkata. “The KDS which I leave is no longer waiting for transformation - it is living it.”

The record numbers came not from pushing harder but from listening. “I made it a point to hear the problems of the trade first. Once you understand what is blocking them, you can address it.” The 42% reduction in vessel non-working time came through rebuilding trust between the port authority and the O&M contractor.

COVID. Russia-Ukraine. Middle East conflict. Panama Canal disruption. Cyclones. Every crisis arrived at KDS's gates. “Whatever happened in the world - it landed at our door. And every time, we kept the port running.”

The two Maritime Excellence Awards, he insists, belong to the team. “Records will be broken. What I hope endures is the culture of listening, of building relationships, of staying on your toes.” He ends at the river. Thirty-four years alongside the Hooghly. “I leave the river as all good companions deserve to be left - with gratitude, and with love.”

The Editorial Team at ASIC wishes Ravi Shankar Rajhans fair tides ahead!



ASIC members bid adieu to Rajhans at the SCI auditorium



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GLOBAL MARITIME ORDER

TRADE, TENSIONS & TRANSITIONS



FREIGHT MARKETS

Capacity Discipline Shapes 2026 - Correction, Not Crisis

Stabilising routes, fleet expansion, and margin compression define the new container shipping reality

The container shipping industry enters 2026 amid visible recalibration.

Stabilisation of disrupted routes, combined with continued fleet expansion, is exerting downward pressure on freight rates. Capacity growth continues to outpace demand recovery. Carriers face margin compression.

Exporters may gain cost relief.

"Correction, not crisis, defines the cycle. Discipline in deployment becomes decisive."

- Gulf News Freight Analysis, March 2026



STRATEGIC CONSOLIDATION

Scale and Alliance Drive Carrier Strategy in 2026

The most consequential development of 2025-26 has been the dissolution of the 2M alliance between Maersk and MSC.

Both carriers are pursuing independent strategies.

MSC has become the world's largest container line by TEU capacity.

Meanwhile, the Gemini Cooperation between Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd has reported schedule reliability exceeding 90% on major trades.

For Indian ports and shippers, evolving alliance structures mean future shifts in port-call patterns.

Kolkata and Haldia must position themselves as reliable, cost-competitive gateway options.

BLACK SEA CORRIDOR

Black Sea: Trade Resilience Tested by Geopolitical Fault Lines

Maritime exports from the Black Sea region remain affected by geopolitical volatility.

Despite disruptions, trade adaptation through alternative routing continues to demonstrate resilience.

Sea lanes remain economic arteries - and strategic fault lines.



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IMO | SEA POLLUTION

SUSTAINABILITY | DECARBONISATION | CLEAN SEAS

IMO's 2026 Strategy: Zero Plastic Waste from Ships by 2030

Draft framework finalised at PPR 13 - adoption expected at MEPC 84

The IMO's Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 13) has finalised a draft 2026 Strategy and Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships.

The framework replaces the 2021 Marine Plastics Strategy and the 2025 Action Plan, consolidating them into a single roadmap targeting zero plastic waste discharge from ships by 2030.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Plastic Pellets (Nurdles): Mandatory code under MARPOL Annex III.
- Fishing Gear: Draft circular on marking systems and FAO Voluntary Guidelines.
- Biofouling Management: Legally binding framework to prevent invasive aquatic species.
- Port Reception Facilities: Improved facilities and enhanced seafarer training.

Source: Marine Insight / IMO

DECARBONISATION

Energy Transition Reshapes Maritime Investment - Ports Redefined by Carbon

Alternative fuels, emissions frameworks, and green corridors drive 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
- Shore power integration at major terminals.

THE NEW PORT SCORECARD

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.

Ports that move early on shore power, bunkering infrastructure and green logistics will attract the next generation of shipping alliances.

Source: Global Maritime Forum





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MARITIME SECURITY

NAVAL ACTION | REGIONAL COOPERATION | NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS

HIGH SEAS | NAVAL ACTION

INS Kolkata Foils Piracy Bid In The Gulf of Aden

**Indian Navy secures merchant vessel in one of
the world's most dangerous shipping corridors**

The guided-missile destroyer INS Kolkata successfully thwarted a piracy attempt targeting merchant vessel MV Mashallah 1 in the Western Indian Ocean.

Acting on intelligence regarding suspicious movements in the Gulf of Aden corridor, the warship deployed its helicopter and boarding teams, neutralising the threat and ensuring the safety of the vessel and crew.

Source: NDTV / Indian Navy



REGIONAL COOPERATION

IOS SAGAR: India Deepens Maritime Bonds Across the Indian Ocean

**Sixteen nations join second edition of India's
flagship naval partnership initiative**

The second edition of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative has commenced with naval personnel from sixteen friendly foreign countries participating.

India assumed the chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in February 2026.

The initiative reflects India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), now embedded within the broader MAHASAGAR framework.



WAR RISK | INSURANCE

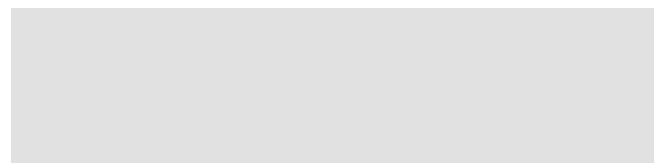
Why it matters more after the
successive US Missile attacks on the
Marivex, Jalveer and Settebello

Govt Plans \$1.5 Billion Reinsurance Fund for Ships in War-Hit Waters

The Government of India is establishing a Rs.14,000 Crore (\$1.5 billion) reinsurance fund for Indian vessels operating in war-risk zones.

The fund will be managed by GIC Re and support commercial insurers facing rising costs linked to conflict-zone shipping.

Also see pg 15





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RECOLLECTIONS



Beyond Shipping: The People, Partnerships and Pride of APL Kolkata

Sushen Dutta

During the 1990s, the American President Lines (APL) presence in Kolkata was more than just a commercial shipping operation. It was a vital gateway connecting Eastern India to global trade lanes. Managing operations during this era meant navigating a dynamic maritime landscape, ensuring container logistics and vessel turnarounds moved with precision.

But what truly defined APL Kolkata was the camaraderie among its people. Bound by a shared passion for international shipping, the team functioned less like colleagues and more like a family. Every operational challenge, late-night clearance and shared success strengthened bonds that have endured long after those years.

These were also formative years for containerisation at Kolkata and Haldia. As trade volumes grew, APL was among the leading carriers helping move thousands of containers through the port, connecting Eastern India,

Nepal and Bhutan with global markets. Supporting this growth was the Association of Shipping Interests in Calcutta (ASIC), established in 1971, which provided a common platform for the shipping community and played a significant role in fostering cooperation and addressing industry concerns.

Looking back, APL's story in Kolkata was part of a larger narrative of a port embracing globalisation, containerisation and partnership. For those of us who were privileged to be part of that journey, it remains a source of enduring pride and fond memories

***Shri Sushen Dutta** is a seasoned logistics and shipping professional with over four decades of domestic and international experience. He served with APL Kolkata from 1991 to 1999, retiring as Operations Manager for Eastern India and Nepal. Following a distinguished corporate career in India and abroad, he is currently a Director of OECL Shipping and Logistics Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata.*





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REGULATORY LANDSCAPE AND SYSTEMIC RISK

Governance Expansion and the Emerging Compliance Horizon :

Regulatory intensity
reshapes maritime
strategy



Global shipping leadership assessments entering 2026 indicate that regulatory expansion - particularly in digital governance, emissions accounting, AI oversight, and cyber compliance - has overtaken traditional operational risks in executive concern rankings. Industry analyses point to tightening Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) enforcement, expanding ESG reporting mandates, sanctions compliance screening, and increasing scrutiny of AI-enabled navigation and logistics optimisation tools.

Shipping companies now navigate a multi-layered compliance environment combining environmental reporting, cyber audit readiness, digital traceability standards, and cross-border regulatory alignment. What was once a compliance function is now a board-level strategic priority.

As vessels become data-enabled platforms and ports operate through integrated digital ecosystems, governance itself becomes operational infrastructure. The regulatory frontier has expanded from hull standards to algorithm standards.

Debt : Seatrade Maritime

Insurance Continuity and Risk Stability Amid Geopolitical Realignment

Recent geopolitical tensions and sanctions regimes have recalibrated segments of the maritime insurance market. India's interim recognition measures for select Protection & Indemnity (P&I) insurers reflect a pragmatic balancing approach to ensure uninterrupted trade while broader insurance alignments evolve. War-risk premiums remain elevated in sensitive corridors, while underwriting scrutiny has intensified for vessels operating in geopolitically exposed regions. Insurance documentation now intersects more directly with port entry requirements, financing arrangements and charter compliance.

Insurance continuity is not merely financial architecture - it is operational legitimacy. Without recognised cover, vessels cannot berth, load, finance or trade. In uncertain geopolitical waters, insurability becomes strategic stability.

Debt : Insurance Business Asia

Legislative Modernisation and Contractual Certainty

India's updated maritime liability framework under the Carriage of Goods by Sea regime represents a significant alignment with contemporary international practice. By modernising carrier liability provisions, clarifying documentation standards and strengthening contractual clarity, the reform enhances predictability for exporters, carriers and insurers alike.

The updated structure replaces legacy provisions drafted for an earlier shipping era, addressing containerisation realities, multimodal trade practices and electronic documentation frameworks.

Legal ambiguity carries cost. Legal clarity reduces friction. When statutory architecture aligns with commercial practice, trade gains confidence.

Debt : Legislative Public Sources



The Association of
Shipping Interests in Calcutta
(Estd 1971)

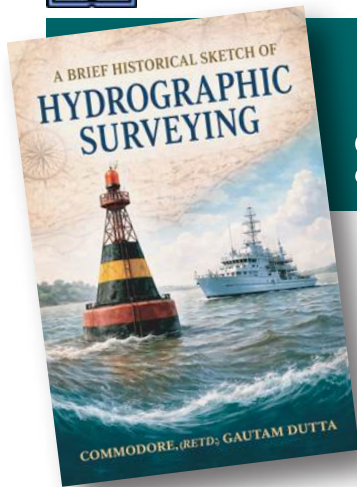
PORTSIDE CALCUTTA

THE ASIC UPDATE

A Newsletter of the Association of Shipping Interests
in Calcutta (Estd 1971) | June-August 2026



BOOK PREVIEW



Hydrography on the Hooghly

**Charting a Legacy: A Preview of
Commodore (Retd.) Gautam Dutta's Landmark Monograph**



In the exacting discipline of maritime science, some careers do more than meet operational challenges — they preserve a nation's navigational wisdom. Commodore (Retd.) Gautam Dutta, former Chief Hydrographer of Kolkata Port Trust, now Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, devoted over four decades to the Hooghly River, one of the world's most dynamic and demanding estuarine waterways. Amid shifting sandbanks, cyclones, tidal surges, and relentless siltation, his work helped ensure that commerce continued to move safely through uncertain waters.

His forthcoming monograph, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Hydrographic Surveying with Special References to India and the Port of Kolkata*, is both scholarly reconstruction and professional testament. It traces the evolution of hydrography from ancient depth sounding and the engineered dockyard at Lothal to the scientific breakthroughs of the Age of Exploration and the refinement of instruments such as the sextant and station pointer. Hydrography, as the author reminds us, demands utmost diligence and accuracy, for small errors may have grave consequences.

Set against this global evolution is the rise of Kolkata as a river port shaped by hydrography at every stage. European commercial expansion, dock construction, river outports, and early marine communication systems unfolded on a river where every tide altered the channel. From Pilot George Herron's 1681 chart to today's digital surveys, a continuous professional lineage emerges — one that opened new channels when old ones silted, supported dredging and river training works, and enabled safer pilotage under increasingly complex conditions.



The book explains the Hooghly's tidal bores, rotary currents, and seasonal variations with scientific clarity, while recounting the development of tidal semaphores and automatic gauges that improved hydrometric precision. Cyclones from 1737 to AILA and AMPHAN reveal hydrographers not merely as measurers of depth but as guardians of maritime safety amid recurring natural adversity.

A substantial portion of the work examines the engineering of the river for navigation, including 150 years of dredging history, the impact of the Farakka Barrage on sedimentation, bar migration, and the breakthrough of the Eden Channel for Haldia access. Historic charts spanning nearly two centuries illustrate the geomorphological drama of the river's approaches near Sagar and the Sandheads, where river and sea converge.

The narrative concludes by turning to modern capability and future promise. Multibeam echo sounders, differential GPS, inertial navigation, and integrated River Information Systems reflect a discipline that has embraced technological precision while remaining rooted in experience. Hydrography emerges as Kolkata's invisible infrastructure — the quiet science that keeps channels open and trade flowing.

This monograph stands as the first comprehensive scholarly account of hydrography at the Port of Kolkata. Anchored in lifelong service and enriched by historical insight, it charts not only the Hooghly but also the generations of hydrographers, pilots, and marine professionals whose dedication and fortitude have ensured that the river serves commerce rather than defeats it.

In the final reckoning, this work is more than a technical chronicle of soundings, charts, and channels. It is a tribute to a river long regarded as difficult and unpredictable, and to the quiet professionals who refused to yield to it. From the age of lead-lines to the era of digital swath mapping, from Herron's first chart to satellite-guided surveys, the Hooghly has tested every generation that sought to navigate it. This monograph stands as both record and homage - affirming that while the river may shift, the resolve, discipline, and courage of its hydrographers and pilots have remained steadfast.



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