

Gujarat Junction 2024 and Exim Star Awards 2024 marked by eminent industry stakeholders coming together for an absorbing interaction and enthusing awards gala

THE vibrant city of Gandhidham, Gujarat, played host to *Exim India's Gujarat Junction 2024 and Exim Star Awards 2024*, the 14th edition, on **Friday, December 20, 2024 at Radisson Hotel Kandla**. It was once again a highly successful cargo and logistics congregation that drew top industry professionals, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, regulatory authorities as well as ex-im trade representatives (see box) from Gandhidham/Mundra, Vadodara and other regions of Gujarat, Mumbai and beyond, a mix of key public and private stakeholders. The event, which focused on the latest trends, challenges and innovations in cargo and logistics, featured two insightful Fireside Chats with leading industry participants and culminated in an exciting awards gala.

The theme of Gujarat Junction 2024 was: Gujarat - A New Era in Shipping, Ports & Logistics.

The Fireside Chats had the audience engrossed

The event kicked off with the Fireside Chats that brought together some of the most influential figures in the cargo and logistics sector. The subjects chosen for the discussion were very relevant given the current scenario, and in the context of the overall theme.

The first Fireside Chat was on:

- **Strategic Role of Gujarat Ports & Connectivity in India's Global Supply Chain: A Comparison with Leading International Ports**

Moderated by **Mr Ramesh Babu, MD, Seashell Logistics Pvt. Ltd.**, who also gave the welcome address, theme presentation and keynote address, it emphasised that Gujarat ports, which handle over 40% of India's total cargo,

will continue to lead in terms of efficiency and productivity, infrastructure development, ease of operation and, going ahead, sustainability.

The DFCs will undoubtedly be a game changer, facilitating logistics efficiency for industrial hubs, ICDs and CFSs, train operators etc. Here the feeder routes are also important. Double-stack operation on the WDFC is a huge advantage, for the overall economics, transit time, dwell time and freight costs, it was pointed out. The final section of the WDFC remains to be completed, which could happen next year or in 2026.

India needs more such freight corridors, which should precede freight supply, for their impact on the business ecosystem throughout the country, was another point made.

Antwerp Port's success was attributed to the vision of its founders and planners over the years, with focus on industry-led development, private players operating terminals, value-added services, multimodal connectivity including through pipelines, impetus on digitisation, and sustainability. The port is continuously scaling up, it was highlighted.

Initiatives like DPA and DPD, in fact, present opportunities to CFSs, rather than negatively impacting their business, for infrastructure outside the port continues to be important. So CFSs will remain an integral part of container ports. Multimodal Logistics Parks being the current focus, maybe CFSs will transform into MMLPs and prioritise value-addition.

From the exporters' point of view, every port should be able to expeditiously load and unload cargo, have shore cranes for better efficiency,



Mr. K. Engineer, IRS



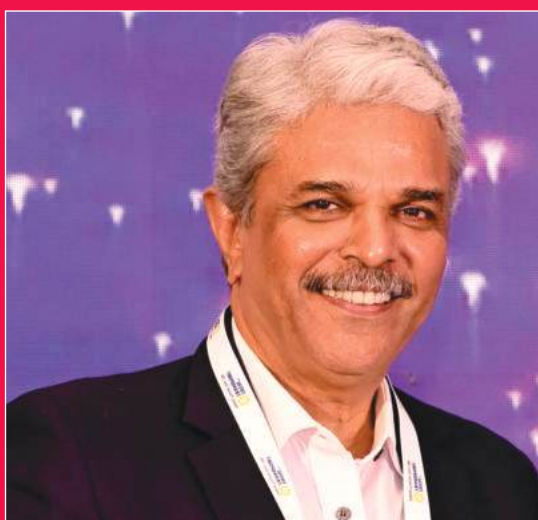
Mr. N. K. Chowdhary, IRS



Mr. C. Harichandran



Mr. Santosh Kumar Singh



Mr. Samir J. Shah



Mr. Rajan Nair



Mr. Naveen Chowdhary



Mr. Daljit Singh Kohli



Participants in the first Fireside Chat were (from left) Mr Daljit Singh Kohli, Capt. Ashish Chandna, Mr Ramesh Babu, Mr N.T. Rayudu and Mr Naveen Chowdhary



The second Fireside Chat was graced by (from left) Mr Ashok Jain, Dr Vishhal Bisen, Mr Samir J. Shah, Mr Tarun Rathod, Mr Shanu Gupta, Mr Rajan Nair and Capt. Sanjay Sharma

SOME OF THE DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS

- ◇ K. Engineer, IRS, Principal Commissioner of Customs – Mundra
- ◇ N. K. Chowdhary, IRS, Assistant Commissioner of Customs – Kandla
- ◇ C. Harichandran, Secretary, Deendayal Port Authority
- ◇ Santosh Kumar Singh, Chief Manager - ICD Khodiyar, Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR)
- ◇ Samir J. Shah, Director, JBS Jeena Logistics
- ◇ Naveen Chowdhary, Executive Vice President – Operations, The Thar Dry Port
- ◇ Ramesh Babu, MD, Seashell Logistics Pvt. Ltd.
- ◇ Ashok Jain, Director, Diamond Shipbrokers (A division of Samsara Shipping Pvt. Ltd.)
- ◇ Tarun Rathod, General Manager (West India), Hapag-Lloyd India Pvt. Ltd.
- ◇ Dr Vishhal Bisen, MD, Samveda Logistics InfraResources Pvt. Ltd. & Landmark CFS (P) Ltd.
- ◇ Capt. Ashish Chandna, Chief Executive Officer, Allcargo Terminals Limited
- ◇ Capt. Sanjay Sharma, Head of Pan-India Operations, J M Baxi Marine Services Pvt. Ltd.
- ◇ Rajan Nair, Partner, Alltime Shipping & IPP, Exim Club Baroda
- ◇ Daljit Singh Kohli, India Representative, Port of Antwerp-Bruges
- ◇ Shanu Gupta, Director, Rishi Kiran Logistics Pvt. Ltd.
- ◇ N. T. Rayudu, Managing Director, Rankers Group of Companies



ensure that dirty and clean cargo are properly segregated, and have adequate back-up space. Fast turnaround is very important, it was emphasised.

The topic of the second Fireside Chat was:

- **Digital Transformation, Seamless Supply Chains and Focus on Sustainability as facilitators of India's International Trade**

The broad spectrum of digitisation and automation are the future of cargo and logistics, it was stressed in this session, which was moderated by **Mr Samir J. Shah, Director, JBS Jeena Logistics**. There was talk about factories and warehouses having small scanners in future, robotic planning, integration of all software so that the software does everything, driverless vehicles, 3D printed warehouses etc., all of which will take efficiency to a new level. Instead of 'just in time', it will be 'manage it time by AI' in the future, it was emphasised.

All the players in cargo and logistics are actively implementing automation and digitisation, be it ports, shipping lines or the wider fraternity, in cargo handling and movement, booking, billing, tracking, safety and more. And the trade is accepting the changed scenario as it understands the benefits.

It was also highlighted that Kandla Port was highly efficient, with speedy loading and discharge of cargo, even when there was much less automation and the technology was basic. Today, a port like Mundra is among the best in the world. The Gujarat model in ports is exemplary, it was pointed out.

The importance of the IMSBC Code in bulk cargo handling and movement was explained, as also compliance and adherence to the various global standards, protocols and mandates that India is part of.

Gujarat also has advantage in manufacturing, with its many industrial zones, prominent SEZs and an effective industrial policy, it was pointed out, which complements its efficient logistics, excellent cargo handling facilities including MMLPs, and global connectivity.

Another area touched upon was the critical importance of the right

skilling for logistics players, especially in this era of fast-changing technology. Adoption of green logistics was also stressed.

The Awards spotlighted some of the best

The **Exim Star Awards 2024** that followed was a glittering ceremony that celebrated the achievements and contributions of key players among companies and individuals in the cargo and logistics industry. The evening was filled with anticipation and excitement as awards were presented in various categories, recognising performance, innovation, operational efficiency, leadership and continued success.

Mr Dhiren Mehta, Promoter of Mehta Group, received a standing ovation when he came up to accept the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Late Mr Tushar Anam of V. Arjoon Shipping Pvt. Ltd was posthumously felicitated for his invaluable contributions, unwavering commitment and significant impact on the cargo and logistics industry over the decades. His son **Mr Jai Anam** accepted the memento.

Key organisations were also felicitated on the occasion:

- **Kandla Customs**
- **Mundra Customs**
- **Port of Antwerp-Bruges**

Members of the Awards Jury present were felicitated too. Another highlight was a **Lucky Draw** that saw 3 winners take home an exciting prize.

The event also provided a perfect platform for networking, as attendees mingled and celebrated their shared passion for advancing the logistics industry.

With its insightful deliberation, notable perspectives and a celebratory recognition of excellence, Gujarat Junction 2024 once again underscored the state's pivotal role and status as a key hub in the domestic and global logistics landscape.

A summation of the points made and opinions expressed by the speakers and panelists follows.



Some of the award winners

THE FIRESIDE CHATS SAW PERTINENT VIEWS AND PERCEPTIVE OPINIONS ON THE PRESENT AND FUTURE FROM SOME OF THE LEADING LIGHTS

First Fireside Chat - Strategic Role of Gujarat Ports & Connectivity in India's Global Supply Chain: A Comparison with Leading International Ports

Ramesh Babu, MD, Seashell Logistics Pvt. Ltd.
(Moderator, welcome address, theme presentation & keynote address)



Mr Ramesh Babu highlighted that Gujarat remains a role model for the rest of the country in maritime sector and logistics development, which will continue given the all-round infrastructure augmentation and other facilitative initiatives being undertaken. The commencement of the DFC will be a further boost. He talked about the ease of operations in Mundra and other ports in the state, the efficiency, and the logistics ecosystem that delivers value to the rest of the economy. Gujarat ports will therefore continue to handle a significant volume (currently 40%) of India's trade. While coastal cargo infrastructure is present, the bottlenecks need to be removed for smoother movement, he said. He also hoped that the geopolitical situation would ease in 2025 following the change in government in the US, leading to a year of peace and progress, which will benefit the cargo and logistics fraternity.

Naveen Chowdhary, Executive Vice President – Operations, The Thar Dry Port



Mr Naveen Chowdhary began by expressing the hope that the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) from Dadri to JNPA, whose last section towards the port remains to be completed, would be fully ready by 2026. ICD operators have always been looking forward to these corridors (the second one being the EDFC from Ludhiana to Bengal), he said, adding that it is his belief that infrastructure development must precede freight. The DFCs will have a positive impact on the business ecosystem throughout India as, for the first time, freight trains will run separately from passenger trains, facilitating seamless connectivity for the ex-im as well as domestic trade. A lot of industrial hubs will come up along the DFCs, he said. A key advantage of the WDFC is double-stack carriage, which is beneficial for the economics of cargo movement - the transit time, dwell time and the logistics cost along the entire supply chain. He also stressed the importance of feeder routes connecting the DFCs and the need to operate a train without weight limitations throughout, which would require infrastructure upgradation. Then the trade would be able to reap the full benefit of the DFC. He also called for setting up more MMLPs and enhanced highway development, all of which will together transform the logistics map of India.

Daljit Singh Kohli, India Representative, Port of Antwerp-Bruges



Commenting on Antwerp port and what Indian ports could learn from its success, Mr Daljit Singh Kohli highlighted some of the factors behind the growth of Antwerp, pointing out that it is an industry-led facility with industry based in the port area where companies are invited to set up facilities. It has the largest chemical cluster in Europe. It is a landlord port, where private companies handle the operations. They can adapt to changes much faster and bring about efficiency. Major players like MSC, PSA and DP World have developed and run terminals at the port, he pointed out. The port engages with companies to understand their requirements and also majorly focuses on value-added logistics. For example, it has a lot of warehousing. Besides, all of its terminals have multimodal connectivity to the hinterland i.e. water, rail and road. The port caters to 60% of the consumer market within a 500 km radius. The aim is to double rail capacity by 2030 as a step towards sustainable/green operations. It is working on becoming carbon neutral by 2050. There is also pipeline connectivity, which the port is looking to augment. It is also focused on boosting digitisation and modernisation. A digital twin of the port is being created, which would be able to remotely monitor and control everything happening in the port area. IT is critical, both software and hardware, for enhancing all-round operations, he emphasised. The port also works closely with start-ups to facilitate innovation.

N. T. Rayudu, Managing Director, Rankers Group of Companies



Mr N. T. Rayudu emphasised on the importance of facilitating speedy handling of especially low value bulk cargoes at ports. Today loading is happening in hours not days, he highlighted, giving the example of a record 58,500 tonnes loaded in 21 hours. The ports and supply chain have to be geared for this. Ports should have proper draught so that they are able to load in the shortest time. Fast turnaround is key, he said. Today we are comparable to some of the best ports in the world when it comes to loading, performance parameters. However, cargo contamination is a challenge. Proper segregation of dirty and clean cargo is very important, he stressed. Berths should have a minimum of two shore cranes to enable faster loading operations. Bulk cargoes also need a lot of back-up space at ports, at least for 2-3 shiploads. If these are there, volumes will improve further. He also called for looking at coastal movement to reduce costs; this requires better infrastructure.

Capt. Ashish Chandna, Chief Executive Officer, Allcargo Terminals Limited



Capt. Ashish Chandna said he sees DPD as an opportunity for CFSs to provide and enhance their value-added services. Our ports still have congestion, so direct movement in and out is not very easy. So CFSs will always remain an integral part of logistics facilitation in India. But things will change. The name might not remain CFS, it could alter to the new concept of MMLP. That is where it is headed, he said. It is not just about bringing a container from port to CFS and giving it to the shipper or consignee; it is about value addition. That's what CFSs are gearing up for; many have commenced providing value-added services.

Second Fireside Chat - Digital Transformation, Seamless Supply Chains and Focus on Sustainability as facilitators of India's International Trade

Samir J. Shah, Director, JBS Jeena Logistics (Moderator)



Mr Samir J. Shah began with the lament that the logistics industry underestimates itself, followed by a challenge to anyone in the world to move even a small volume without a logistician. We should stop being at the receiving end, stand up for ourselves and support each other, he emphasised. He called on the industry to give importance to ethics, innovation, and share ideas with each other. Being secretive is not good for the industry. One should share with each other to be able to learn from each other. He also stressed on the importance of compliance and doing things in the correct manner without shortcuts. India is a signatory to many global mandates and protocols and has to follow them. We won't be having fewer compliances. But the government will work very hard to facilitate adherence to those compliances.

Ashok Jain, Director, Diamond Shipbrokers (A division of Samsara Shipping Pvt. Ltd.)



Mr Ashok Jain began by highlighting the pivotal role Gujarat has played in the Indian ports sector. He said he has been dealing with Kandla Port for the last 30 years, and even 25 years back it was expeditious in loading and unloading cargo with limited technology and automation. Today things have further improved, which shows that it is continuously upgrading. Also, Mundra Port is among the best in the world, in terms of sophistication, infrastructure, productivity, efficiency. It has inspired many other ports in the country. Gujarat ports handle over 40% of India's cargo and overall the Gujarat model in ports has been exemplary, he emphasised. He also talked about the importance of the IMSBC Code, an international framework introduced by the IMO and applicable to all bulk carriers, for the safe handling and carriage of bulk cargo. Cargoes are categorised into 3 groups/classes and there are requirements to be complied with. Anybody working in this segment must be fully aware of the IMSBC Code, he said.

Rajan Nair, Partner, Alltime Shipping and IPP, Exim Club Baroda



Mr Rajan Nair began by saying that Gujarat cargo must ship out of Gujarat ports, that is the thumb rule. What manufacturers need at the end of the day, he said, is ease of doing business, that would facilitate smooth production and delivery to customers. He highlighted that Gujarat has good global and hinterland connectivity, infrastructure, SEZs, many industrial corridors with more coming up, MMLPs, ICDs etc. Besides, the state has a facilitative industrial policy, with incentives offered to manufacturers and a key focus on MSMEs. It is adding more products like electronics and renewable energy. Agri products are being promoted. Pharma, ceramics, engineering goods, seafood, chemicals need to be promoted from Gujarat, he said. He also highlighted the enhancements in logistics, pointing out that the recent establishing of rail connectivity between the Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal at Varnama (Vadodara) with the WDFC would facilitate double-stack movement to and from North India and improved cargo transportation from the industrial belts to the gateway ports.

Shanu Gupta, Director, Rishi Kiran Logistics Pvt. Ltd.



Mr Shanu Gupta highlighted the growing importance of digitisation and technology and how it will be shaping the future of logistics. Technology is today increasingly being adopted by all the stakeholders in the trade including Customs. Digital freight forwarding is an option presently. He foresaw a future where factories and warehouses could be having small scanners to facilitate self-examination and clearance of goods at one's own premises. Just like self-declaration. Robotic planning, he said, will integrate all the software, and based on one's data/history, the software will do everything from taking quotations from suppliers, booking the containers and facilitating delivery at the doorstep. And all of this will be handled by just one person using that software. The future will see driverless heavy commercial vehicles for faster and cost-efficient delivery of cargo. There could also be 3D-printed warehouses. Right now it takes 8-9 months to construct a basic warehouse. A 3D-printed one would only take a month, thereby saving in time and cost. Digitisation and technology will thus reduce cost and time and increase efficiency, he said, adding that he foresees a shift from 'just-in-time management' to a 'managed in time by AI'.

Capt. Sanjay Sharma, Head of Pan-India Operations, J M Baxi Marine Services Pvt. Ltd.



Capt. Sanjay Sharma pointed out that compliances are also necessary for ensuring that the cargo reaches its destination safely. On automation and the use of technology, he stressed on their importance today for improved operations and efficiency. Ports in Gujarat, be it Mundra, Kandla, Pipavav or Hazira, have varying levels of automation and technology implementation in their operations and processes. So do the other segments of logistics, and it is an ongoing process. Manual intervention is thus reduced in many areas. Automation doesn't need to be AI-enabled; it can be process-oriented, he pointed out. And automation is not at the cost of safety; it cannot be at the cost of safety. Automation, in fact, enhances safety and security, he said.

Tarun Rathod, General Manager (West India), Hapag-Lloyd India Pvt. Ltd.



Mr Tarun Rathod made the point that carriers have adopted digitisation for some time now, which has been a game-changer. All in the logistics industry want to go in for digitisation and automation. Everybody understands its importance, be it ports, Customs or the carriers. And it is not about reducing manpower, but increasing efficiency, faster communication and transparency. For example, customers can keep track of their cargo throughout sitting in front of a computer. People have accepted this change. It was a challenge initially but no longer. In fact, the trade wants more of digitisation. On electronic bill of lading (ebl), he said it is already here and the carriers are ready. It needs wider acceptance from other stakeholders. The response to ebl has been positive, though not everyone is on board currently. However, the acceptance will improve and maybe 5 years down the line one might see 100% usage, he said.

Dr Vishhal Bisen, MD, Samveda Logistics InfraResources Pvt. Ltd. & Landmark CFS (P) Ltd.



Dr Vishhal Bisen talked about the huge transformation currently ongoing in the sector due to digitisation and technology, which calls for skilling and training people. The government is bringing about changes to facilitate tech adoption and encouraging digitisation through proper monitoring and specific timelines. Digitisation is therefore visible. Skilled manpower is a must to carry this forward. This is where the trainers have a key role, he pointed out. Youngsters should be encouraged to join the industry and should be properly skilled and trained. There are many interesting courses and certifications in logistics and supply chain. BSc Logistics is an example. But awareness needs to be created among the masses. He stressed the need for soft skills, analytical skills and technological skills, adding that today IT is a critical segment of logistics because of the penetration of technology. All government agencies are proactive in making Digital India successful, he said. He also called on the industry to adopt green logistics and pitched for more participation of women in the sector.

J M Baxi

NVOCC OF THE YEAR (GP)



WINWIN MARITIME LIMITED



NVOCC OF THE YEAR (SPECIAL EQUIPMENT)



Goodrich Maritime Private Limited

NVOCC OF THE YEAR (ISO TANK CONTAINER)



Kalash Global Logistics Pvt Ltd



CONTAINER FREIGHT STATION OPERATOR OF THE YEAR



Allcargo Terminals Limited

INLAND CONTAINER DEPOT & RAIL OPERATOR OF THE YEAR (PUBLIC / PRIVATE)



Container Corporation of India Ltd.
(IN PUBLIC SEGMENT)



Hasti Petro Chemical & Shipping Limited - The Thar Dry Port
(IN PRIVATE SEGMENT)

END-TO-END LOGISTICS SOLUTION PROVIDER OF THE YEAR



LP India Logistics Pvt. Ltd.

FORWARDER OF THE YEAR (COASTAL CARGO)



Pushpak Logistics Solutions LLP

A photograph of four men standing in front of a Maersk backdrop. The backdrop features the Maersk logo (a blue square with a white star) and the word "MAERSK" in large, bold, white letters. The man on the far left is wearing a light-colored kurta and glasses. The man next to him is wearing a light-colored blazer and a white scarf, holding a trophy. The man next to him is wearing a grey blazer and a white scarf, holding a framed certificate. The man on the far right is wearing a dark blazer and a white scarf, also holding a framed certificate.

YOUNG LOGISTICS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



Mr. Naitik Joshi, Transvoy Logistics India Ltd.



DYNAMIC LOGISTICS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR - SHIPPER



Mr. N.T. Rayudu, Rankers Group of Companies



WAREHOUSING AND SUPPLY CHAIN COMPANY OF THE YEAR



Milak Group of Industries



DYNAMIC LOGISTICS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



Mr. Rajan Nair, Alltime Shipping

DYNAMIC LOGISTICS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



Mr. Sandeep Rajwanshi, PSA Ameya (Mundra)

MOST DIVERSIFIED SHIPPING & LOGISTICS GROUP IN GUJARAT



Parekh Group

DYNAMIC ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



Mr. Dhiraj Satyapal Sharma, IHA Logistics



FAST GROWING FREIGHT FORWARDER OF THE YEAR (BARODA REGION)



Almighty Shipping & Logistics Pvt. Ltd.

WOMAN PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



Mrs. Meera Zala, Allcargo Terminals Limited



POSTHUMOUS FELICITATION



Late Mr. Tushar Anam of V. Arjoon Shipping Pvt. Ltd for his invaluable contributions, unwavering commitment and significant impact on the cargo and logistics industry over the decades. His son Mr Jai Anam accepted the memento.

FELICITATION

Kandla Customs



For its integrity, efficiency and excellence in facilitating international trade

FELICITATIONS

Mundra Customs



For its integrity, efficiency and excellence in facilitating international trade

Port of Antwerp-Bruges



For extending its knowledge & support to Gujarat's maritime trade over the years

THE EMINENT AWARDS JURY WAS FELICITATED

JURY CHAIRMAN

Mr. Bharat Gupta, President,
Kandla Port Steamship Agents Association

JURY MEMBERS

Mr. Moncy George, Managing Director, WINWIN MARITIME LIMITED
Mr. Danedran Gopalan, Director, Tristar Logistics (India) Pvt Ltd.
Mr. Naitik Joshi, Director & CFO, Transvoy Logistics India Limited
Mr. Ketur Mankad, General Manager, Narendra Logistics Pvt. Ltd.



Mr. Bharat Gupta (left)



Mr. Moncy George (right)



Mr. Ketur Mankad (right)



Mr. Naitik Joshi (right)

LUCKY DRAW WINNERS



Ms. Leena Mathew
(Goodrich Maritime Pvt. Ltd.)



Mr. Sandeep Bhagia
[Seabird Marine Services (Guj.) Pvt. Ltd.]



Mr. Rachin Aiya
(Aum Maritime Pvt. Ltd.)

THE FRATERNITY MADE ITS PRESENCE FELT IN NUMBERS





Thank You



Event Partners, Speakers, Panelists,
Jury, Supporter & Delegates
for making

GUJARAT JUNCTION 2024 & EXIM STAR AWARDS 2024
a Grand Success

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