

Minutes of the 24th meeting of National Shipping Board (NSB) New Delhi held on 30th May 2025 at 10:30 hrs in the Conference Hall of Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), Mumbai

The 24th Meeting of the National Shipping Board (NSB) New Delhi was held on 30th May 2025 at 11:30 hours in the conference hall of Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), Mumbai. The list of participants/attendees (including online) is as follows:

Attendees:

Board Members:

1. Shri Sameer Kumar Khare, IAS (Retired), Chairperson, National Shipping Board, New Delhi
2. Shri Ajithkumar Sukumaran, Chief Surveyor, Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai
3. Shri Mandeep Singh Randhawa, In-charge Maritime Administration Division, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, New Delhi (online)
4. Shri Rakesh Singh, President, Indian Coastal Conference Shipping Association, Mumbai
5. Shri Anil Laxman Devli, Chief Executive Officer, Indian National Shipowners Association, Mumbai
6. Shri Rahul Modi, Managing Director, Coastal Containers Transporters Association
7. Shri Milind Kandalgaokar, General Secretary, National Union of Seafarers of India, Mumbai
8. Captain Tushar Pradhan, General Secretary, Maritime Union of India, Mumbai
9. Shri Arun Sharma, Executive Chairman, Indian Register of Shipping, Mumbai
10. Shri Madhu S Nair, CMD, Cochin Shipyard Limited, Kochi (online)
11. Dr. K. Murali, Professor, IIT Madras, Chennai (online)
12. Ms. Sanjam Sahi Gupta, Director, Sitara Shipping Limited, Mumbai
13. Shri Shantanu Kalita, Advisor, Indian Ports Association, New Delhi
14. Shri Pankaj Verma, DIG, Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi (online)
15. Shri Raghu R Nair, Commodore, Naval Operations, Indian Navy, New Delhi (online)
16. Shri Pankaj Sehgal, representative of Ministry of Petroleum, Oil & Natural Gas, New Delhi (online)

Secretary:

17. Shri Nebu Oommen, SS-cum-DDG, DG Shipping, Secretary National Shipping Board, Mumbai

Permanent Invitees:

18. Shri AK Bansal, Representative from Inland Waterways Authority of India, Noida, U.P. (online)

19. Shri Vikas Narwal, Representative from Indian Ports Association (online)

Special Invitee:

20. Shri Madhukar Gurde, Representative of Directorate General of Light Houses & Lightships, Noida, U.P.

2. Introductory Remarks:

2.1. At the outset, the Chairperson, NSB welcomed all the Board Members of the newly constituted National shipping Board, New Delhi (constituted vide Gazette Notification No. S.O.1935(E). dated 30/04/2025 of Government of India, Ministry of Shipping, Ports & Waterways File No. ST-16011/4/2016-MA), representatives of the permanent invitees & Special Invitee and the staff of Dg Shipping & NSB Secretariat attending (both physically and virtually) to the 24th meeting of NSB.

2.2. The Chairperson NSB requested Shri, Nebu Oommen Secretary NSB to initiate the meeting with the introduction of all the participants. The Secretary NSB got all the participants introduced and then he gave a detailed presentation on the constitution, composition, tenure, category of members, and powers and functions of the National Shipping Board (NSB).

3. Confirmation of the minutes of last NSB meeting held on 26/06/2023:

3.1. The minutes of the last meeting which was held on 26/06/2023 (the minutes of were circulated to the members of the predecessor Board) were considered as confirmed as no comments to the contrary were received after the circulation the minutes as informed by Secretary NSB who was also the Secretary of the predecessor board.

4. Keynote address by the Chairperson NSB:

4.1. The Chairperson NSB Shri Sameer Kumar Khare in his keynote address emphasized the importance of the five key Government initiatives namely “**Maritime India Vision 2030, Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, Ease of doing Business / Ease of Living, Make in India / Atmanirbhar Bharat and PM Gati Shakti**” and requested all the members to align the future work of the Board accordingly. He underscored the need for highlighting the voices of various stakeholders in the maritime sector before the Government and to remain in touch with them on continuous basis for effective implementation of the government policies. He stated that the board should act as a

bridge between the government and the various stakeholders in maritime sector and to serve as the face of the government in the field and ensuring accessibility of all stakeholders to this forum. A combination of a **“top-down” and “bottom-up” approach** is necessary. The board must ensure that government policies are executed efficiently while also representing the voices of the unheard of the maritime sector. Extensive consultations must be conducted with representatives of those stakeholder groups which are not officially the part of the board to ensure that their concerns are heard and presented to the government. While the Government has undertaken numerous initiatives in the maritime sector, certain key gaps remain while implementation in the field. The board should identify such implementation gaps and apprise them to the Government wherever necessary. Since the board has a limited timeframe of two years, it is necessary that board must prioritize major issues for study of the board rather than attempting to address every issues. The issues which are not being addressed by the board can also be presented to the Government for consideration, based on the severity of the issue. While concluding his keynote address, he encouraged the board members to become **“Voices of the Unheard”** in the maritime sector and to act as **“Think Tank”** for the Government.

5. Action Taken report on the decisions of the last NSB meeting:

5.1. The latest status of action taken on the minutes of the last meeting held on 26/06/2023 was discussed and it was observed by the board that the status of action taken was not available on records. Further no board meetings were not held since 26/06/2023 and in the meantime the term of the predecessor board expired in August 2024. **It was felt by the board that the Secretary NSB should write to all concerned to collect the latest status on the action taken on the minutes on board meeting dated 26/06/2023 and to present the same to the board in the next meeting.**

Action: Secretary NSB

6. The status of the reports of sub-groups constituted by the predecessor board:

6.1. The predecessor board constituted 13 subgroups in its meeting dated 17/02/2023 (10 subgroups) and dated 26/06/2023 (3 subgroups). The existing sub groups are as under:

- Sub Group 1 on **“Shipping Policy and Merchant Shipping Act”**
- Sub Group 2 on **“Increase in Indian Tonnage”**
- Sub Group 3 on **“Multimodal Transportation”**

- Sub Group 4 on **“Increase in Employment of seafarers, seafarer welfare and other issues related to seafarer”**
- Sub Group 5 on **“Promotion of Ship Building and Making India a Global hub for Manufacturing of Green Tugs, Port/Pilot Craft, Coastal Vessels and Ferries”**
- Sub Group 6 on **“Promotion of energy efficient and low-cost coastal shipping for passenger and freight”**
- Sub Group 7 on **“Creation of National Single Portal for Pre Arrival Notification”**
- Sub Group 8 on **“Transition to IMO’s Maritime Single Window by 01/01/2024 and Digital Enablement”**
- Sub Group 9 on **“Development of Galathea Bay as Transshipment Hub for BIMSTEC Countries”**
- Sub Group 10 on **“Partner Institution for Developing, Human resource, Training, Automation, Digitization and Research”**
- Sub Group 11 on **“Review of Two Pre Independence Acts viz ‘Indian Bill of Lading Act 1856’ and ‘Carriage of Goods by Sea Act 1925’”**
- Sub Group 12 on **“Container Tracking and Tracing Systems”**
- Sub Group 13 on **“Regional Maritime Transport Grid”**

It was observed by the board that all the subgroup reports are not available and wherever they are available, they are not available in the presentable form. The board further conducted a status update on the NSB subgroups, assessing progress made over the past two years and identifying key initiatives that need to be taken forward. The Board was of the view that given the changing landscape, a documented review of completed and ongoing efforts will help the board to determine current priorities and guide the board’s next steps. **It was felt by the board that the Secretary NSB should write to all concerned to submit the subgroup reports in a uniform format and to present the same to the board in the next meeting.**

Action: Secretary NSB

7. Key points discussed by the board members:

7.1. Time Gap between constitution of the consecutive boards: It was felt by the board that at times there is a long break between the Gazette Notifications of the constitution of the two consecutive boards because of which the continuity of the work being done by predecessor board / subgroups constituted by the predecessor board is lost. **It was**

felt by the board that to ensure continuity of the board / sub group work, the Maritime Division in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways should be requested to take advance action on selection and notification of the board members so that there is no break between constitution of two consecutive boards.

Action: Director MA, MoPSW

- 7.2. **Permanent Office address and setup for the board:** It was felt by the board that the board should have a permanent office address so that continuity in board works is maintained and the members of the new board are enriched by the collective wisdom of the predecessor boards. It is highlighted by the board that the institutional memory of the works being undertaken is invariably lost when board changes with long breaks in between. At present the work done by predecessor boards is not available at one place for accessing by the members of the new board. To address this issue, a permanent office address and set up for the NSB is needed as per **Rule 9 of the National Shipping Board Rules, 1960**. The responsibility of keeping the old records should be fixed either with the board (if continuity is maintained) or with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways or with the DGS Mumbai. **It was felt by the board that the Maritime Division in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways should be requested to do the needful for greater interests of maritime sector.**

Action: Director MA, MoPSW

- 7.3. **Development of a dedicated website for the Board and designing of a programme to increase social media presence / public outreach of the board amongst stakeholders:** It was felt by the board that there is a need for a dedicated website for the board. Presently, only the old address of the board and the minutes of few board meetings are displayed on the DGS website. A member informed that the NSB already has an active Twitter handle with a significant number of followers. However, there has been no recent updates on the platform. A review is required to ensure timely activation and maintenance of the handle. It was mentioned that DGS is actively working on the development of its website. The website is expected to be launched soon. On similar lines, the new website of NSB should be launched. The goal should be to ensure transparency and accessibility while maintaining necessary confidentiality. It was felt by the board that a timeline is needed to be set by the DGS Mumbai for development of the dedicated NSB website in addition to designing a programme to increase social media presence / public outreach of the board amongst stakeholders. **It was felt by the board that the DGS Mumbai should be requested to do the needful in time bound manner.**

Action: DG Shipping

- 7.4. **Dedicated Phone Numbers for the Chairperson and the Secretary of the board:** It was felt by the board that the Chairperson and the Secretary of the board should have dedicated phone numbers and same should continue when Chairperson and the Secretary changes so that all the official phone communication by SMS or by WhatsApp remain with the board to ensure continuity and accessibility. **It was felt by the board that the DGS Mumbai should be requested to do the needful in a time bound manner.**

Action: DG Shipping

- 7.5. **Dedicated email IDs for the Board (Chairperson & Members) & Board Secretariat Staff:** It was felt by the board that Board (Chairperson & Members) & Board Secretariat Staff should have dedicated email IDs and the same should continue when Board (Chairman & Members) & Board Secretariat Staff changes so that all the official communication remains with the board to ensure continuity and accessibility. **It was felt by the board that the DGS Mumbai should be requested to do the needful in time bound manner.**

Action: DG Shipping

- 7.6. **Invitation of the representative of Maritime State Development Council (MSDC):** It was felt by the board that the State Maritime Boards play an important role in the holistic development of the maritime sector and there is a need to involve State Maritime Boards in the NSB's activities. It was felt by the board that in case, it is difficult to make State Maritime Boards as regular members of the NSB, then the possibility of including them as invitees—either by rotation or through another structured approach should be explored. In addition, one representative of the MSDC should be made a regular member of the NSB. **It was felt by the board that the Maritime Division in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways should be requested to do the needful for greater interests of maritime sector.**

Action: Director MA, MoPSW

- 7.7. **Monthly Updates:** it was felt by the board that the monthly updates on the action initiated based of the decisions taken by the board should be provided on the website to the board members as the official board meetings in the past have occurred once in every three months.

Action: Secretary NSB

- 7.8. **Roadmap for the Shipping Building & Ship Repairs Sector:** Shri Arun Sharma, Executive Chairman, Indian Register of Shipping, Mumbai emphasized that the shipping industry is entering its third super cycle, driven by technological advancements and climate change, leading to greener, tech-oriented ships. Over the next 20 years, fleet renewal will focus on advanced ships with decarbonization and

green fuels, ensuring strong market demand and premium pricing. India's shipbuilding growth will depend on global collaboration and exploring nuclear technology for improved efficiency and sustainability. Over the years the India's share in Ship repairs industry has declined, losing ground to Dubai, Colombo, and Singapore. Reviving Ship repairs will require infrastructure improvements and policy support. As of now Ship repairs remain profitable and it complements shipbuilding. Strengthening this sector through better infrastructure and global collaboration will help India regain competitiveness. Best practices from global maritime leaders should be studied and incorporated into these plans to enhance industry standards, efficiency, and sustainability. The Government has launched several action plans for the Indian flag in maritime operations. The board should review these initiatives, assess their impact, and explore ways to align or enhance them for better synergy. A detailed evaluation will help strengthen collaboration and industry engagement. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.9. **Roadmap for Increasing number of Ships with Indian Flags:** Shri Anil Laxman Devli, Chief Executive Officer, Indian National Shipowners Association highlighted that Indian Shipowners struggle with the initial financial burden of IGST on imports. Even though it is supposed to eventually lead to zero GST liability through input credit, the shipowners are not able to offset the same. The current system of Direct & Indirect taxation discourages Indian flagging while allowing foreign entities to access to the Indian shipping market. Immigration costs add an unofficial burden to operations. Conflicting perspectives between regulatory bodies delay implementation of critical reforms. Long-standing policy and regulatory challenges require stakeholder consultations and inter-ministerial coordination. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.10. **Road Map to resolve long pending issues of Indian Seafarers as raised by NUSI:** Shri Milind Kandalgaokar, General Secretary, National Union of Seafarers of India stated that India has always been in the forefront of providing social security for its seafarers, much before many other countries. It was the agitation under the banner of National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) in 1963 outside the Hon'ble Parliament of India in New Delhi which led to the enactment of Seamen's Provident Fund Act, 1966 for providing social security of Provident Fund for seafarers serving on Indian flag ships. Thereafter, for years NUSI has been demanding Provident Fund, Gratuity and

Pension for all ranks of our seafarers serving on both, Indian and Foreign flag ships. This NUSI demand was agreed by the Board of Trustees of the Seamen's Provident Fund on 11th January 2021. The draft amendment to the Seamen's Provident Fund Act, 1966 was sent the Government of India. It is now more than four years that the issue to provide the **Provident Fund, Gratuity and Pension for all ranks of Indian seafarers serving on both, Indian and Foreign flag ships** is yet to be taken to logical conclusion. He further stated that for years, NUSI has been demanding quota for Indian seafarers while travelling in all modes of transport. The Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) while agreeing to the NUSI demand had sent communication to all Zonal Railways for the **inclusion of seafarers in priority list for railways ticket booking and for medical assistance**. Despite this, seafarers are still facing difficulty in travelling by Railways. He also highlighted that for years NUSI has been taking up the matter of **Shore Leave for seafarers** with the Government of India to safeguard their health and well-being. It is a fundamental right of seafarers. In the fifth meeting of the special tripartite committee held in April, 2025 in accordance with Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006, amendments to the code relating to regulation 2.4 - Entitlement to leave, were discussed. Members should work with shipowners, seafarers' organizations, and port stakeholders to set procedures that support seafarers' shore leave. Port and terminal staff should be informed and trained on seafarers' rights, including shore leave. But Indian seafarers are not allowed shore leave in Indian ports. The matter has been agitated before the highest authorities of the country. He informed that during Covid 19, when all modes of transport were at a standstill, only seafarers kept the world moving by their passion, determination, and bravery. NUSI had demanded **"key workers" status for Indian seafarers**. In its April 2025 meeting, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has formally endorsed to formally recognise seafarers as "key workers" aiming to ensure that seafarers are treated with the dignity and priority they deserve. Indian has its own robust Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 and has also proudly ratified the Maritime Labour Convention. India has shown leadership for other countries to follow in many areas. But on these issues, matter is pending for long. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.11. **Road Map to resolve long pending issues of Indian Seafarers as raised by MUI:** Captain Tushar Pradhan, General Secretary, Maritime Union of India informed that the issue of **shore Leave** has been under discussion with the Directorate General (DG) and MLC compliance board since July 2024. However, as of date, clearance for all ports is still awaited from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) or the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW). He also highlighted that the last meeting of the National Welfare Board was held in 2021 and **no meeting of the National Welfare**

Board was held thereafter. He stated that following the 23rd NSB meeting held on 07 July 2023, no formation of a **working group** nor any further discussion on the points raised on increase in **employment of seafarers, seafarer welfare and other issues related to seafarer were done**. Additionally, concerns were raised about **seafarer coastal sector vacancies remaining unfilled**. There is reluctance from foreign companies to hire Indian officers despite their competency certifications. Strengthening training programs and industry collaboration could improve employment opportunities. It was also suggested that attention be given to the issue of seafarer vacancies in the coastal sector remaining unfulfilled, due to concerns over the applicable tax component. A review of the taxation framework may help make these roles more attractive to Indian seafarers. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.12. **Indian Representation in the IMO:** Captain Tushar Pradhan, General Secretary, Maritime Union of India stated that a **permanent representative from India** should be appointed to participate in all International Maritime Organization (IMO) / Indian Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) meetings. This matter is currently under process and awaiting clearance from the Ministry. He suggested that as an interim procedure, considering delays in approval for physical participation at IMO / ILO events, it is recommended that Ministry may be requested to allow attendance in these meetings online in hybrid mode, to ensure India's continued presence and contribution. A shadow committee can be formed for IO meetings to ensure timely approvals and consistent nominations. To streamline participation, committee selections should be set a year in advance and carried forward, allowing some officials to attend physically while others participate online. **It was felt by the board that the Maritime Division in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways should be requested to do the needful for greater interests of maritime sector.**

Action: Director MA, MoPSW

- 7.13. **Road Map to address pending issues of Ship Breaking / Ship recycling Industries:** Shri Rahul Modi, Managing Director, Coastal Containers Transporters Association stated that the ship recycling industry in India is undergoing significant developments, with a focus on compliance, worker welfare, and global leadership. He further stated that to promote these industries involve measures like showcasing compliant ship recycling facilities to enhance India's global reputation, preventing non-compliant vessel arrivals, and standardizing regulations to align with Basel Convention requirements. He stressed that addressing deep-sea port access issues and improving waste treatment and environmental compliance are also very crucial for

industry growth. Additionally, mandatory worker training needs reform—currently, a two-week unpaid training discourages migrant labour, and a shorter or paid model could improve participation. The Ship Breaking Act takes effect on June 26, 2025, with DG Shipping as the National Authority and Gujarat Maritime Board overseeing local implementation. India's compliance with the Hong Kong Convention ensures premium recognition for Indian yards, despite challenges with BIS steel standards. With IMO's Green Transition, ship recycling is positioned as a sustainable industry, recycling 99% of ships. Bhavnagar is emerging as a key container hub, with ongoing developments such as the Inland Container Depot (ICD) to streamline logistics. However, certain operational challenges have been raised, requiring stakeholder consultations to address concerns and ensure efficient implementation. Given the strategic importance of Bhavnagar's container facilities, organizing a stakeholder meeting to gather advice and suggestions would be beneficial. Additionally, tweeting updates within the group could help raise awareness and facilitate discussions on necessary improvements. The Bhavnagar session (June 25-26) will showcase India's ship recycling leadership, reinforcing green standards and expanding decentralized facilities. **He stated that BIS needs to be invited in the next NSB meeting along-with representatives from Ship Breaking / Recycling Industries from Alang & Bhavnagar.** Container pricing inflation remains a concern, with NITI Aayog raising cost-related issues on domestic manufacturing under the PLI scheme. High production costs have delayed India's ₹11,000 crore PLI launch, prompting a reassessment of incentives. He underscored the need of forming a subgroup for ship recycling issues, if needed. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.14. **Roadmap to address Coastal Trading Issues:** Shri Rakesh Singh, President, Indian Coastal Conference Shipping Association informed that the percentage of waterways in domestic transport in India still hovers around 6% (coastal) and 1-2% (Inland waterways). Most of the cargo carried through inland waterways is “lighterage operation” on the coasts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, which is necessitated essentially due to a lack of adequate infrastructure. Impediments to the “modal shift” have been identified in detail in various studies conducted by different agencies, along with recommendations. Direct (shipowners) and indirect (shippers) incentives have been suggested to plug the viability gaps. The truth of the matter is that the modal shift will be successful and sustainable only if it is viable. A peninsular coastline is not necessarily conducive to the transportation of goods. Coastal transportation of goods needs to be reevaluated by dividing the coast into “short sea passages” of, say, 500 KM and working on a “hub and spoke” basis. EU states have successfully implemented this approach and have been highlighted in past studies

conducted as well. Additionally, the pattern of “production” and “consumption” in India is quite skewed. Cargo availability is key. There is also a general lack of awareness in the industry (shippers) of the potential and possibilities of coastal transportation of goods in India. It is recommended that a study be commissioned on the above subject, taking the ground realities into account. The study should give specific and practical suggestions on trading routes, nature of cargo, types/size of ships suitable for the trade, and the potential business partners. He further stated that the “modal shift” generally considers the use of smaller ships of up to 6-8000 DWT carrying capacity suitable for the coastal trade to maintain optimum draft. Over the years, the number of small “cargo carrying Indian ships” has hardly seen any growth except for the industries (steel, cement) with captive requirements. This has created a “chicken and egg” situation (ship vs cargo). He highlighted that it is the need of the hour that All Indian ships (as recommended by DGS) are brought under the ambit of infra-status, the SARFAESI Act is amended, 5% IGST on ship acquisition is removed, low-cost and collateral fee funding for ships engaged exclusively in domestic trade (Indonesian model) is promoted and the GST regime on ship chartering is rationalized. He further stated that the waterways have an inherent disadvantage over rail and roadways in terms of first and last-mile connectivity. The only way to offset this disadvantage is to introduce Ro-Ro, which is a capital-intensive exercise. Besides, the rail and roadways have virtually “free run” when compared to laws governing maritime trade. To make the coastal shipping competitive, it is essential that marine fuel used by coastal vessels is brought under 5% GST. Indian ships consume about 1 to 1.5% of the total fossil fuel used by the entire nation. This suggestion has the support of MoPSW and needs to be taken up with the GST council. Additionally, the shortage of biofuel in India is yet another impediment to the “greening” of ships engaged in coastal trade. He informed that despite various government pronouncements, the major ports and private ports, due to their huge investments, can only reduce their tariff to a certain extent. Besides, these ports are always “customs notified,” which works as one of the biggest impediments to trade. It is suggested that state governments should be encouraged to allocate space and provide incentives to develop finger jetties/berths with adequate draft and connectivity to facilitate coastal trade. Also, the existing major and non-major ports should be incentivized to allocate dedicated (preferably non-notified) berths to coastal ships. The immigration, customs, and port health authorities see no difference between a ship engaged in EXIM trade and an Indian ship engaged in coastal / domestic trade. The costs and delays due to this regulatory overreach are significant and benefit only the “middlemen.” Though often identified as “low-hanging fruit” the DGS / MoPSW, despite the best intentions, has not been able to convince the concerned ministries/agencies to adopt a more practical and realistic system for Indian coastal ships. It is suggested that the representations by the NSB members be made to the respective agency / ministry to present our case and propose a substantially equivalent system of reporting, identification, and traceability, such as

online reporting and updating of information. The gap between the demand and supply of officers to man coastal ships has worsened over the period due to increased local and overseas demand. The lack of supply has skyrocketed the operating cost. The tax on income as such always makes employment on Indian ships a “second choice” for Indian seafarers. This situation is likely to persist and even worsen. Therefore, it is suggested that the officers holding Certificate of Competency (CoC) under the Indian Vessel Act 1917 are allowed to upgrade their knowledge and skills through additional training to create a larger pool of officers. As an interim measure, the government may also permit Indian nationals holding a foreign CoCs to serve on Indian coastal ships. Many maritime countries have established a separate legal framework for their ships engaged in domestic trade and have implemented it quite successfully. (for example, JG-Japan, ZC-China, and BKK-Indonesia). The policy intent in India has been to create synergy between coastal and inland trade. The “Convention-minus” approach may need a relook. A holistic review of regulations applied to ships operating on the coast needs to be undertaken. He further informed that the biggest impediments to the growth of IWT have been the non-availability of sufficient water throughout the year in the waterways, inadequate marking of channels, limited night navigation facility and the situation will evolve further once these impediments are addressed. An agreement was signed with Bangladesh under domestic laws, limiting international compliance requirements, expected cost reductions etc. However, the same is mainly benefiting Bangladeshi operators as the Ships are utilizing the protocol for cost advantages. The Indo-Bangladesh trade agreement has largely helped the shipowners from Bangladesh, with hardly any Indian flag ships operating on the protocol route. The high operating cost makes Indian ships unviable. Indian vessels now operate along the coast but face restrictions when engaging with Sri Lanka due to international regulations. Additionally, a gap exists where India cannot conduct ship repairs for vessels in comparison to Sri Lanka, creating operational challenges that need addressing. India needs to enter into a Bangladesh like agreement with Sri Lanka as soon as possible to integrate Indian coastal vessels operating between the ports on the East / West coasts of India with the ports in Sri Lanka (Colombo). Myanmar should be the next obvious choice for similar agreement. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.15. **Roadmap to address Gender issues in Maritime Sector:** Ms. Sanjam Sahi Gupta, Director, Sitara Shipping Pvt Ltd stated that we should ensure gender representation in all initiatives including Sagar Main Samman which needed inputs from womens associations such as WISTA and IWSF. Capt Pradhan stated these efforts will be highlighted at the IMO event in November 2025, where the Honourable Minister Ports,

Shipping and Waterways will be present. **She highlighted the need for a dedicated gender diversity group to address policy concerns and industry-wide participation.** She further stated that the Women's inclusion in non-hazardous roles is also essential for skill development and inclusivity in the Ship Recycling sector. She informed the board that she has been actively engaging with the European Community Association, which has shown interest in visiting Indian ship recycling yards in September 2025. A world-class ship recycling yard with a 350-worker facility is set to be launched in June-July 2025, presenting an opportunity to inspect and showcase India's advancements to the European ship recycling community. She stressed the need to explore ways to increase gender diversity in the maritime sector through inclusive policies and training programmes. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.16. **Road map to address issues pertaining to Indian Coast Guard:** Shri Pankaj Verma, DIG, Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi stated that the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) plays a critical role as a first responder in maritime safety and emergency response, working closely with DG Shipping and the Maritime Administration. He stated that there is a need for designation of major port tugs as emergency responders when Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs) are unavailable. Additionally, he proposed deputing an officer to DG Shipping and MoPSW to enhance coordination during emergencies, search and rescue operations, and maritime law enforcement. He further highlighted the need for ICG participation in Maritime India Vision (MIV) groups or subgroups related to maritime safety. Port development increases traffic and risks, requiring integrated risk assessment. The CRI framework and Port Bombay's project lacked this consideration. A basic emergency response plan, including at least one capable tug, should be mandated. He suggested that a **dedicated subgroup** in NSB should be formed to improve **maritime safety** preparedness. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.17. **Roadmap for the Regional Maritime Transport Grid:** Mr. AK Bansal, Chief Engineer, IWAI informed that the Regional Maritime Transport Grid (RWG Project) aims to strengthen waterway connectivity between Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and India. The traffic study for the project has been awarded to KPMG, with its report expected within next six months. A key focus is on reviving the Jungipur Lock, a critical

link for India-Bangladesh waterway connectivity, with a consultant engaged to prepare a detailed project report. Additionally, the Digital Waterway Grid Project will enhance connectivity with Nepal and Bhutan, while developing new ports in Bangladesh where needed. Future interventions will be guided by the traffic study findings to optimize regional waterway infrastructure. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.18. **Study for authentic documentation of India's Maritime Legacy:** Shri Shantanu Kalita, Advisor, Indian Ports Association, New Delhi stated that India has a very rich Maritime Legacy which is dating back to Harrapan / Indus Civilization and much more beyond. But surprisingly the 'National Maritime Day' is observed on April 5th, marking the 1919 voyage of SS Loyalty from Mumbai to London, India's first Indian-owned vessel. Given India's 5000+years' maritime legacy, there is a need for authentic documentation of India's Maritime legacy and the board could form a **sub group to explore Indian Maritime Heritage & historical achievements** and identify a date for the National Maritime Day that better represents India's ancient seafaring history. **It was felt by the board that a roadmap should be prepared by NSB on these lines to outline strategies and recommendations that could be taken forward for further discussion and implementation.**

Action: NSB

- 7.19. **Roadmap for Green Tugboats:** Shri Madhu S Nair, CMD, Cochin Shipyard Limited stated that all ports are required to have at least one green tugboat. Most ports have already onboarded this initiative, while some are in the process of onboarding. This represents a significant achievement of this solution. **It was felt by the board that this green initiative should be given further impetus with suitable policy support and the board should gather feedback from various ports on its replicability and scalability.**

Action: NSB

- 7.20. **Synchronization between Board activities and various cells in MoPSW:** Dr. K. Murali, Professor, IIT Madras, mentioned that through various cells, several action plans have been initiated by the MoPSW. It would be beneficial for the board to review what has been accomplished and explore ways to synchronize or synergize with those action plans for its activities. Regarding his subgroup constituted by the predecessor board, he also stated that final report has been prepared by his subgroup. But based on multiple meetings of the subgroup, some action points were identified by his subgroup. As a result of those meetings, new programs have been initiated,

incorporating computer science as a dual degree in some of the programs of DG Shipping, and parallelly at IIT Madras, an MBA program has also been created. A detailed presentation on these developments was made by his sub group in the last meeting of the predecessor NSB. He further informed that during the intervening period, some members from IMU have either been shifted or retired. He stated that sub group needs to be reconvened to present its future vision in the next meeting of the NSB. **The board felt that all subgroups including this subgroup should submit their reports by June 30, 2025, so that they can be taken forward in the next meeting.**

Action: All NSB members

- 7.20. **Nomination of NSB member in the Governing Council Narrotam Morarji Institute of Technology:** The board was informed by Secretary NSB that NSB secretariat has received a request from a **Narrotam Morarji Institute of Technology** for nomination of one of the NSB member on its Governing Council. On approval of the predecessor board, Mr. Anil Devli, an NSB member in the predecessor board had served on the Governing Council of the Institute from **FY 20-21 to FY 22-23**. The institute, supported by DG Shipping and INSA, provides basic shipping familiarization and could be valuable for studies and reports. As a not-for-profit organization, it co-opts industry members and offers dispensation for two papers in the international charter ship broker examination (MICS). It was informed that the institute plays a low-profile yet impactful role in maritime sector. **The board decided to nominate Shri Anil Devli as NSB nominee on the Governing Council of the Institute from FY 25-26 to 27-28 as was done by previous board.**

Action: Secretary NSB

8. Presentations by Various institutions:

In the post lunch session, following presentations were made before the board members.

- 8.1 Presentation 1: Sagar Setu (NLP-M) Maritime Single Window Shri Vikas Narwal, Managing Director, IPA,** discussed the current state and future for the Maritime Single Window (MSW) system, emphasizing the need to advance from its current version to MSW 2.0 for improved electronic data exchange without multiple data entry points. He highlighted the IMO's mandate for a single window environment to streamline maritime transport and avoid duplication of efforts. The MSW aims to facilitate seamless information sharing among various agencies, while current compliance stands at around 59%, necessitating efforts to make it mandatory for ships at Indian ports. Shri Vikas Narwal stressed the importance of establishing a regulatory framework led by DG Shipping to enforce compliance and enhance

security through a notification system for vessels entering Indian waters. He also called for integration with customs and immigration systems to ensure efficient data exchange and expressed IPA's readiness to advance the current MSW to MSW 2.0 to optimize operations and avoid duplication of efforts. Following the presentation, representatives from IPA emphasized the need for clear direction from the ministry regarding the upgrade to MSW 2.0, noting that discussions about transferring the project to IPA have occurred but lack formal written confirmation. They highlighted that progress on several initiatives has stalled due to this uncertainty and reiterated the necessity of integrating existing systems into the MSW, contingent upon receiving the required approvals from the ministry. **It was felt by the board that the Maritime Division in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways should be requested to do the needful for greater interests of maritime sector.**

Action: Director MA, MoPSW

8.2 Presentation 2: Directorate General of Lighthouse and Lightships: Mr. Madhukar

Gurde, Deputy Directorate General from the Directorate General of Shipping presented on India's maritime navigation and safety systems, detailing the establishment of nine radar stations and seven test transmitter stations, along with a Marine Navigational Training Institute in Kolkata. He highlighted the use of advanced LED lighthouses and Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) to enhance navigation safety, with the VTS network covering 16,500 square kilometers in the Gulf of Kutch. Plans for integrating VTS at 12 major ports and the National Maritime Domain Awareness Project were discussed, along with the use of physical storage stations for AIS transponders that relay real-time data to regional control centres and the National Data Centre in Mumbai. It was stated that the data from the 87 Physical Storage Stations (PSS) is not shared internationally, as it is for domestic use only. The organization has reduced its manpower from 1,018 to approximately 470, raising concerns about staffing, especially in remote areas. The importance of reliable personnel for national security was emphasized, along with the need for proactive measures in monitoring maritime activities and integrating IT systems for better data management. **Overall, the discussions highlighted challenges in data sharing, staffing, and maintaining security and efficiency in maritime operations. It was felt by the board that the Maritime Division in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways should be requested to do the needful for greater interests of maritime sector.**

Action: Director MA, MoPSW

8.3 Presentation 3: D.G Shipping Presentations: The various officials representing the DG shipping made following presentations to sensitize the members about functioning of the Directorate of Shipping.

Crew Branch: Captain PC Meena from the Nautical Server, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) discussed critical aspects of crew affairs. The crew branch is essential to DGS, placing India among the top five largest seafarer supply nations globally, with over 500,000 Indian seafarers, including approximately 7,000 to 8,000 women, reflecting a remarkable 700% increase in female participation over the last decade. The DGS has established international connections with the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Two significant national initiatives were highlighted: "Sagar Me Samman," launched on May 18, 2025, to promote female participation in maritime, and "Sagar Me Yog," aimed at developing training modules for seafarers in collaboration with yoga associations, set to launch on International Yoga Day (June 21). The meeting also addressed the 24/7 grievance redressal system established in 2011, which currently handles over 500 grievances monthly, with most resolved at the initial level. A pressing issue discussed was the abandonment of seafarers, with 547 Indian seafarers abandoned across 82 vessels, a situation monitored by the IMO and ILO Joint Committee. Additionally, an upgraded RPSL (Recruitment and Placement Service License) module was launched in 2019 to ensure compliance among recruitment companies. Lastly, the "Crew Connect Milan" initiative is planned for January-February next year at Bombay Port, aiming to connect seafarers with shipping companies and international organizations. The meeting concluded with a commitment to enhance the welfare and support systems for Indian seafarers, particularly focusing on female participation and effective grievance resolution, with plans to follow up on the discussed initiatives in the next meeting.

Training Branch: Presentation for Training Branch at the Directorate General of Shipping, outlined the training branch's commitment to preparing Competent Professional Resource Students (CPRS) according to international maritime standards. He highlighted upgrades to the admission process and the digitalization of evaluation and certification for the Certificate of Competency (CoC). The meeting addressed challenges in gaining admission to maritime training institutes, with only six government institutes and numerous private ones involved. The National Maritime Day Celebrations Committee promotes maritime awareness through public outreach programs. Efforts are underway to engage youth from NCC and ITIs to encourage maritime careers. Additionally, a top-down approach is needed to increase employment rates in the maritime sector from 13-14% to 20% by 2034. Initiatives include facilitating naval officers' transition to the merchant navy and providing scholarships for women candidates in maritime courses. Overall, the meeting emphasized collaboration and innovative training solutions to strengthen India's maritime workforce.

Engineering Branch: The presentation highlighted the establishment of the IOCE Smart, a centre of excellence for sustainable maritime transport, in collaboration with SCI Lal. This initiative aims to create a sustainable research facility to enhance maritime transport practices. The consultative document for the National Green Shipping Policy is currently under review, with stakeholder consultations planned to finalize the draft. The policy aims to integrate best practices for greener shipping, addressing the need for alternative fuels to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, in line with international mandates. The presentation also covered the importance of

developing a National Port Sustainability Council and a ship sustainability index to promote sustainable practices in ports. Recent achievements include the issuance of LNG bunkering guidelines and ongoing work on biofuel guidelines, with future plans for methanol and ammonia bunkering guidelines as alternative fuels gain traction. An implementation roadmap has been prepared to adapt these initiatives to the Indian context, defining roles and responsibilities for effective execution. Overall, the focus remains on fostering a sustainable maritime future through collaboration and innovative practices.

Nautical Wing: The presentation addressed security measures related to maritime operations, particularly in response to piracy and other incidents. The organization has established multiple protocols and dedicated centres, such as the Digi-com LRIT Centre and the Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre, to monitor and track Indian vessels globally. These centres utilize satellite technology to automatically transmit ship positions, enhancing security and response capabilities for incidents involving Indian ships or seafarers. The presentation highlighted the importance of coordinated responses to maritime incidents, exemplified by a recent event in Kochi, where immediate action was taken to ensure national-level coordination. The Directorate also emphasized its international cooperation efforts, engaging with various organizations and agencies to protect India's maritime interests and ensure compensation for affected parties in incidents like the MSCL 3 situation. Additionally, the Directorate is working on establishing a Bureau of Port Security to enhance port safety and security measures, similar to the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security. This new initiative aims to integrate efforts from various agencies, including the Coast Guard and intelligence bodies, to conduct audits and ensure compliance with international security standards. The proposal for this bureau has received clearance from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways and is awaiting final approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Overall, the Directorate General of Shipping is focused on strengthening maritime security through enhanced communication, international collaboration, and the establishment of dedicated security frameworks to address current and future challenges in the maritime domain.

International Cooperation Branch of DG Shipping: The International Cooperation Branch of the Directorate General of Shipping plays a crucial role in enhancing India's maritime engagements globally. This branch coordinates bilateral maritime cooperation, provides technical inputs for free trade agreements, and develops country dossiers to facilitate maritime trade arrangements. Currently, the branch is focused on establishing green shipping corridors and strategies, aligning with global sustainability goals. The branch is also working to ensure that India has a strong presence in international maritime organizations, advocating for the inclusion of Indian representatives in technical discussions. This initiative aims to provide accurate inputs during international engagements, thereby enhancing India's influence in maritime policymaking. Furthermore, the branch is exploring opportunities to sponsor academic chairs in universities to foster research and development in maritime studies. This aligns with the government's increasing focus on the shipping sector, recognizing its potential for economic growth and job creation. India is actively participating in international maritime collaborations, including the establishment of green and digital

shipping corridors with countries like Singapore and the Netherlands. The branch is committed to providing necessary inputs and support for these initiatives, reinforcing India's position as a key player in the global maritime landscape. Overall, the International Cooperation Branch is dedicated to advancing India's maritime interests through strategic partnerships and innovative practices.

75 Years Anniversary Celebration for DG Shipping: The Directorate General of Shipping is preparing to celebrate its 75th Anniversary with a series of events and initiatives that honour India's rich maritime heritage. The discussion began with a reflection on historical milestones, including the registration of India's first vessel, the *Kawashti*, on March 29, 1856. This historical context sets the stage for the upcoming celebrations, which aim to interlink India's maritime past with its present and future. A key focus of the anniversary celebration will be the National Maritime Day, observed on April 5, which aligns with the inauguration of a new maritime heritage museum. This museum will serve as a testament to India's maritime legacy. The celebration will feature a variety of activities, including three knowledge-sharing conferences throughout the year, the production of a commemorative coffee table book, and a 22-minute documentary highlighting the achievements of the Directorate General of Shipping. Additionally, a nationwide newspaper supplement will be published in prominent publications such as *Business Standard* and *Times of India*, with editions in both English and Hindi. The main celebration is scheduled for September, during which a special exhibition will be held at the Maritime Training Institute, open to the public for two weeks. This exhibition will showcase the history and advancements of the maritime sector in India, emphasizing the Directorate's contributions over the past 75 years. Overall, the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Directorate General of Shipping aims to honour the past, celebrate the present, and inspire future generations in the maritime industry.

Naval Architecture Wing: The presentation discusses the role of the smallest technical wing within the Directorate General of Shipping in India, which consists of four members focused on naval architecture. Their primary responsibilities include overseeing the design, construction, and maintenance of ships, ensuring compliance with international conventions related to stability, fire protection, crew accommodation, and other engineering aspects. The team collaborates with various stakeholders to develop policies related to shipbuilding, repair, and cluster development under the National Shipbuilding Mission. They are tasked with facilitating investment in the maritime sector and addressing existing challenges that hinder growth, such as the declining share of cargo carried by Indian-flagged vessels. The presentation highlights recent initiatives, including visits to ports for assessing the feasibility of establishing shipyards and clusters. It also emphasizes the need for demand aggregation and the establishment of technical working groups to create specifications for ships and engage with new technologies. Overall, the focus is on improving the shipbuilding industry in India, making it more competitive, and ensuring that policies align with market demands and international standards. The team is working on simplifying guidelines for the private sector to encourage investment and participation in shipbuilding activities.

Shipping Development Branch: The Shipping Development Branch is focused on addressing key indirect taxation issues that impact the maritime industry, including the 5% GST on imports for Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services and double taxation by customs. The ministry has created 14 business development cells, one of which is dedicated to flagging reforms and business development. The speaker stresses that resolving these taxation issues is essential for promoting business growth in the shipping sector. The branch is compiling data and position papers from the industry to prepare a comprehensive report for the ministry, outlining how existing regulations affect shipping operations and the financial burdens associated with importing vessels and related charges. The presentation highlights the importance of substantial ownership, chartering Indian-controlled tonnage, and improving the ease of doing business. It discusses the Marine Development Fund and policies aimed at increasing Indian content to attract investments. The proposal includes utilizing existing provisions such as vessel sharing agreements, age norms for ships, long-term charter options through Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and the IFSCAR regime, which provides tax holidays. The overarching goal is to enhance the competitiveness of the Indian shipping industry by tackling regulatory and financial challenges.

MSL Branch: The presentation, centered on the Merchant Shipping Act and the upcoming Shipping Act 2025. It highlighted the ongoing legislative work, including the drafting of necessary rules. The establishment of an India Arbitration Centre was discussed to improve maritime arbitration processes. Additionally, the Merchant Shipping Law branch is providing valuable insights on institutional matters related to the shipping industry. The discussions also touched on the potential roles of corporations in the maritime sector and the importance of these legislative updates in advancing India's maritime framework.

9 Decisions Taken by the Board:

- 9.1** It was decided by the Board that the next meeting of NSB should be held within the next 45 days, during the first / second fortnight of July 2025 on a date mutually convenient to all members. **The last date for issue of the notice for the next NSB meeting by the Board Secretariat was fixed on or before 30/06/2025.**

Action: Secretary NSB

- 9.2** It was decided by the board that the members of the existing sub groups should prepare a status update / final report of the old subgroups in the standard template to be circulated shortly. **The last date for communication of the status update / final report of the old subgroups by the members to the Board Secretariat was fixed as 30/06/2025.**

Action: NSB Members

9.3 It was decided by the board that all the members should examine the current relevance of the old subgroups (13 No.) and offer their views on continuation / modification / deletion of the existing sub groups and addition of new sub groups, if any. The members should also offer their views on potential inclusion of new members in the subgroups. **The last date for communication of the views by the members including NO VIEWS to the Board Secretariat was fixed as 30/06/2025.**

Action: NSB Members

9.4 It was decided by the board that all the members should examine the current relevance of the ongoing issues from the previous board's agenda and offer their views on whether to continue, modify, or drop any of the ongoing issues from the previous board's agenda. **The last date for communication of the views by the members including NO VIEWS to the Board Secretariat was fixed as 30/06/2025.**

Action: NSB Members

9.5 It was decided by the board that all the members should offer their views on new issues to be taken up the newly constituted Board for next two years. These new issues should be aligned with key government initiatives like MIV 2030, MAKV 2047, Ease of Doing Business / Ease of Living, Make in India, and PM Gati Shakti. **The last date for communication of the views by the members including NO VIEWS to the Board Secretariat was fixed as 30/06/2025.**

Action: NSB Members

9.6 It was decided by the board that all the members should offer their views on the ways in which they could support the smooth functioning of the board including providing assistance in areas such as social media presence of NSB, website development of NSB, stakeholders' engagement, preparing action plan or roadmap for NSB for the next two years. **The last date for communication of the views by the members including NO VIEWS to the Board Secretariat was fixed as 30/06/2025.**

Action: NSB Members

9.7 It was decided by the board that in the next meeting representative of the **BIS should to be invited along-with representatives from Ship Breaking / Recycling Industries from Alang & Bhavnagar.**

Action: Secretary NSB

10 **Vote of thanks:** In the end, the Chairperson NSB thanked all the NSB members, the permanent invitees and the special invitees present in the meeting for their august presence (physical as well as virtual) and their active participation in the meeting. He also expressed his gratitude to the Directorate General of Shipping and its staff along

with the of the staff of the NSB secretariat for their support and hard work. The meeting was declared formally closed by the Chair.
