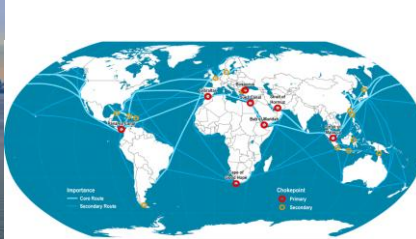


Indian Maritime News Express

Date: 26 July 26

Mumbai-India

International Maritime Trade & Transport



Cargo ship hit in Russian strikes in Black Sea was carrying grain: India



The attack came amid a sharp escalation in Russian strikes on Ukraine's maritime infrastructure.

The Kremlin had earlier defended the missile strike on the cargo ship, saying that Russian forces will continue targeting vessels it believes are carrying military supplies for Ukraine. The attack had left **10, including four Indian seafarers, dead.**

In response to Moscow indicating that a ship in Black Sea — in which [four Indians were killed](#) — was targeted for carrying military supplies for Ukraine, India said that the vessel was carrying "grain" as cargo.

This is significant with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar raising the issue of targeting of ships and killing of Indian seafarers with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and Delhi summoning a senior Russian diplomat in the Capital to lodge an official protest.

The Kremlin had earlier defended the missile strike on the cargo ship, saying Russian forces will continue targeting vessels it believes are carrying military supplies for Ukraine. During a weekly briefing on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, while responding to Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov's comments, said:

"As per information made available to us from the Directorate General of Maritime Administration, India, MV Golden Leo, the Guinea-Bissau-flagged commercial vessel involved in the tragic incident in the Odesa port, had loaded grain as cargo prior to its departure on 19 July 2026.



We once again reiterate that commercial shipping and seafarers must not be targeted under any circumstances. The External Affairs Minister had made this position clear in the EAS (East Asia Summit) and ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) meetings and reiterated (the same) with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov."

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Peskov had said Russia remained in contact with India over the deaths but made it clear that its military campaign would not change. "We continue our contacts with our Indian partners, we clarify our position, and most importantly, our armed forces are striking and will continue to strike those vessels that are involved in transporting ammunition, weapons, and so on for the purposes of the Kyiv regime," Peskov had said.

The comments came after India lodged a strong diplomatic protest with Moscow over the attack on MV Golden Leo, which was hit on Sunday. According to Ukrainian authorities, the ship was struck by three Russian cruise missiles, killing 10 crew members — four Indians and six Syrians.

While deaths of Indian seafarers in the US-Iran war in West Asia have been reported in the last four-and-a-half months, this is the first time that sailors from the country have died in the Russia-Ukraine war.(Source: The Indian Express.)



Indian Shipping Industry



4 Indian seafarers death underlines need to protect maritime order



More than 10 per cent of the world's seafarers are Indian. When merchant ships become targets, it is not only seafarers who are at risk, but the maritime order that has long kept the world's commerce afloat

The killing of four Indian seafarers in the Russia-Ukraine war is tragic. It also signals the erosion of long-standing norms, underpinned by international law, that are meant to protect civilian maritime commerce. [The MV Golden Leo, struck by a Russian missile in an attack](#) that killed 10 seafarers in all while departing a Ukrainian port, was not a military vessel but a merchant ship.

New Delhi has summoned Russia's chargé d'affaires and lodged a protest — rightly so, given the loss of Indian lives and India's stake in the freedom and safety of commerce at sea. In the past few weeks, Indian seafarers, including three aboard the MT Settebello, have been among sailors killed in and around the Strait of Hormuz, as merchant shipping and civilian crews are increasingly caught in the line of fire.

The purpose of International Humanitarian Law is to shield non-combatants from the horrors of war. Repeated attacks on shipping suggest that these protections are being increasingly violated, especially when great-power interests are involved. Merchant vessels engaged in civilian commerce cannot lawfully be attacked unless they are being used for military purposes.

The MV Golden [Leo](#) was reportedly carrying grain when it was struck. The global economy depends on maritime shipping and its continuance even amid conflict. Ukraine remains one of the world's leading grain exporters, supplying markets across Europe, North Africa

and Asia; disruptions across the Hormuz have already exposed the vulnerability of global energy supplies.

More than 10 per cent of the world's seafarers are Indian, many serving aboard foreign-flagged vessels such as the MV Golden Leo (Guinea-Bissau) and the MT Settebello (Palau). Following the deaths of two Indian seafarers in West Asia last week, the Directorate General of Shipping has advised shipowners, ship managers and recruitment agencies against deploying Indian seafarers on voyages through the Strait of Hormuz.

These are necessary steps. New Delhi must also defend the norms that protect civilian shipping. When merchant ships become targets, it is not only seafarers who are at risk, but the maritime order that has long kept the world's commerce afloat.

(Source: The Indian Express)



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Indian Port Sector



India introduces new rules for sea carriage of plastic pellets



The listing container vessel *MSC Elsa 3* off the coast of Kerala, India. The ship sank on May 25, 2025, causing some of her cargo of plastic pellets to wash ashore, with some reaching as far as Sri Lanka.

The Indian Government, through the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), has issued a new circular aimed at reducing the environmental risks associated with the transport of plastic pellets by sea, marine insurer NorthStandard said on Wednesday, July 22.

Effective from April 15, 2026, vessels carrying plastic pellets to, from, or through Indian ports must ensure the cargo is stowed under deck only, with carriage on deck prohibited.

The circular also requires plastic pellets to be packaged to standards at least equivalent to those prescribed for dangerous goods under the IMDG Code, helping to prevent losses during transport.

The DGS also highlighted several recent incidents involving container losses at sea, where plastic pellets had caused long-term pollution impacts and costly clean-up operations.

One notable incident is the [sinking of the container vessel *MSC Elsa 3*](#) off the coast of Kerala state on May 25, 2025. Some of the ship's cargo of containers were laden with plastic pellets, and many of these ended up washing ashore [as far as Sri Lanka](#).

NorthStandard said the circular reflects wider developments at the IMO, which is currently looking to strengthen the safe transport of plastic pellets.



Vizhinjam row: Minister's remarks expose rift within UDF



Speaking to reporters in New Delhi on Friday, Shibu said there was nothing improper about the transfer of shares between Adani and MSC.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Differences within the ruling UDF government over the transfer of Adani Ports' stake in Vizhinjam Port to Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) have come into the open, with Minister Shibu Baby John stating that they were aware of the proposed transfer well before it became a political controversy.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi on Friday, Shibu said there was nothing improper about the transfer of shares between Adani and MSC.

"The discussion on the transfer of stake has been going on for a long time. We all knew about it even before the assembly elections," he said. "The transfer of stake is a long process. Is it like going to the market and buying fish?" Shibu asked.

His remarks appear in contrast with Chief Minister V D Satheesan's statement in the assembly that he came to know of the proposed transfer through newspaper reports.

Responding to criticism from the opposition, the chief minister had said the CPM mouthpiece Deshabhimani had carried the report on June 5.

The CPM, however, disputed the chief minister's claim, saying an economic daily had reported the proposed transfer on June 1, days before the Deshabhimani report.

GMB floats EoIs for Three Shipyards, Six New Ports

The Gujarat Maritime Board has invited Expressions of Interest (EoIs) for the development of three new shipyards, a mega shipbuilding cluster, and six greenfield ports, marking a significant step in strengthening the state's maritime infrastructure and shipbuilding capabilities.

The proposed projects are aimed at attracting private investment, expanding port capacity and positioning Gujarat as a leading hub for shipbuilding, ship repair and maritime logistics.

The three shipyards are expected to cater to the construction and maintenance of a wide range of commercial vessels, while the planned mega shipbuilding cluster will provide integrated infrastructure for ship construction, equipment manufacturing, ancillary industries and maritime services.



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Government Exempts IFSC GIFT City Units from Licensing Requirement under the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025

The Government has exempted units established in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), GIFT City, Gandhinagar, from the licensing requirement under **Section 11 of the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025** for chartering foreign vessels for EXIM and international trade operations.

The exemption, notified by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways under the provisions of the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025, **removes the requirement for eligible IFSC units to obtain a licence from the Director General of Shipping for chartering foreign vessels for operations covered under Section 11.** The reform is expected to strengthen GIFT City as a globally competitive maritime leasing and financing hub, facilitate maritime investments and support India's emergence as a leading maritime services centre.

The measure is also expected to facilitate greater participation of global capital in maritime assets, encourage the establishment of ship-owning and leasing structures in India, and accelerate the development of a comprehensive maritime ecosystem encompassing ship leasing, financing, asset management and other value-added maritime services.

The policy aligns with the Government's broader vision of establishing GIFT City as a world-class International Financial Services Centre for global maritime business.

Importantly, the exemption is limited to the licensing requirement under Section 11 of the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025 and does not alter the existing framework governing coastal trade. The prevailing cabotage regime and safeguards applicable to coastal shipping remain unchanged, while regulatory flexibility has been provided for EXIM and international trade operations.

The notification comes into force with immediate effect. "International Financial Services Centre" shall have the meaning assigned to it under clause (g) of sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019.

'Proposal to designate Sri City as a dry port under examination'

The Minister has clarified that the government was committed to reducing freight transport costs and connecting the Telugu States to an international — standard logistics network

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal has said in the Lok Sabha on July 23 that a proposal to designate Sri City in Tirupati district as a dry port was being examined by the Inter-Ministerial Committee under Customs.

and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal. File. | Photo Credit: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal has said in the Lok Sabha on July 23 that a proposal to designate Sri City in Tirupati district as a dry port was being examined by the Inter-Ministerial Committee under Customs.

Replying to a question on the creation of export-import logistics infrastructure (Inland Container Depots and Container Freight Stations) in Andhra Pradesh (AP) asked by Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath on July 23, Mr. Sonowal said the Inter-Ministerial panel approved proposals for eight new dry ports, including Fatehpur in Telangana, and another nine new proposals were under active consideration of the Centre. These include Sri City in AP and Chityala in Telangana. **(Source: The Hindu)**

vessel with four Indians struck at Ukraine's Odessa port; two safe, fate of two awaited



The incident occurred on Saturday (July 25, 2026) when MV AGN Ragnar was hit at the Port of Odesa, one of Ukraine's key Black Sea ports

The Indian Embassy in Ukraine is 'closely monitoring' the situation after one more cargo vessel was hit by a projectile in the Black Sea port of Odessa. In a notification, the Embassy said that the ship *MV AGN RAGNAR* had four Indian seafarers out of whom two are safe while information about other two nationals is awaited.

"*MV AGN RAGNAR* which was struck at the Port of Odessa, on 25 July. Four Indian nationals were on board the vessel. As per the latest information, two have been confirmed safe, and information is awaited regarding the other two nationals. Search and rescue operations are under way. The Embassy is in constant touch with the concerned authorities," said the Indian Embassy in an announcement without specifying who had fired the projectile that hit the ship

"Four Indian nationals were on board the vessel. As per the latest information, two have been confirmed safe, and information is awaited regarding the other two nationals," it wrote in a post on X. It also shared emergency contact details for those requiring consular assistance, including the emergency phone number addresses

- **Point of Contact, Embassy of India, Ukraine**

cons.kyiv@mea.gov.in

cons1.kyiv@mea.gov.in

Our Emergency contact no. - +380933559958 Mr. Aji Kumar, SS (Consular) @MEAIndia pic.twitter.com/2XolkORrcu

(Source: NDTV/The Hindu)



India's Foreign Trade

45% of India's exports to the US out of Section 301's 10% tariff net



The Centre said 45% of India's exports to the US remain outside the new 10% Section 301 duty. India was placed in the lower tariff tier after USTR cut the proposed levy from 12.5%

India's ministry of Commerce on Saturday said about 45 per cent of India's exports to the United States (US) will remain outside the scope of the additional 10 per cent tariff imposed by the US under Section 301 of the Trade Act, 1974, as several key export categories are exempt from its conditions.

The clarification came days after the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced the final outcome of its Section 301 investigation into the acts, policies and practices of 60 economies, including India, related to the prohibition and enforcement of measures against goods produced with "forced labour".

The final decision imposes an additional 10 per cent ad valorem (according to value) duty on imports from India, lower than the 12.5 per cent duty proposed on June 2 this year.

In a statement, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said: "On account of these exemptions, an estimated 45% of India's exports to the United States remain outside the purview of the additional 10% Section 301 duty."

The ministry said products that continue to remain outside the additional duty include generic pharmaceuticals, smartphones, and certain other specified goods that already attract zero additional duties.

It also said products already covered under Section 232 measures, including steel, aluminium and auto parts, will not face the new 10 per cent Section 301 duty because those tariffs already apply separately to imports from most countries.

According to the government, the remaining 55 per cent of India's exports to the US will attract the additional 10 per cent duty. However, it said India's overall tariff incidence under the final decision remains lower than that of most other economies covered by the investigation. **(Source: Business Standard)**

Govt Strengthens Export Diversification Through FTAs,

New Delhi, The Government has undertaken measures to diversify India's export markets through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), trade negotiations, export promotion initiatives, e-commerce export infrastructure and logistics reforms. The information was provided by Minister for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

Recent trade agreements include the India–Mauritius CECPA, India–UAE CEPA, India–Australia ECTA, India–EFTA TEPA, India–Oman CEPA, India–UK CETA and India–New Zealand FTA. India–EU FTA negotiations concluded on January 27, 2026, while negotiations are ongoing with several other countries and regional blocs. The FTAs aim to expand market access, promote bilateral trade and investment, address non-tariff barriers and support exports, particularly in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel and leather.

The Government is also engaging with trading partners on standards, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade and other regulatory requirements. The Export Promotion Mission, launched in 2025 with an outlay of Rs 25,060 crore for FY 2025–26 to FY 2030–31, includes the NIRYAT PROTHSAHAN sub-scheme for improving access to trade finance and NIRYAT DISHA for export quality and compliance, international branding, market access, logistics, warehousing and trade intelligence.

The Government is also implementing the E-Commerce Export Hub initiative on a pilot basis to support logistics, customs clearance and other export-related services. The Districts as Export Hubs initiative identifies 3–5 products or services with export potential in each district for targeted interventions.

Export procedures have also been simplified. The RBI has relaxed export reconciliation requirements for small-value exports up to Rs 10 lakh, while the per-consignment value limit for courier exports has been removed. Customs procedures have also been eased for the re-import of export rejects and returned goods related to cross-border e-commerce exports.

The Ministry of MSME has established 65 Export Facilitation Centres to provide mentoring and handholding support to MSMEs. Its International Cooperation Scheme also supports MSMEs in participating in international exhibitions, fairs, conferences and buyer-seller meets abroad.

Compiled through various sources for private circulation

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26nd July 2026