

# Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal chairs Review and Consultation Meeting with Port and Maritime Stakeholders

## Meeting focuses on strategic adaptation to the evolving dynamics of global shipping

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**Mumbai, 19 March 2026**

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, chaired a review and consultation meeting with port and maritime stakeholders on Thursday, March 19, 2026 in Mumbai. The meeting focused on strategic adaptation to the evolving dynamics of global shipping.

The meeting brought together representatives from shipping lines, terminal operators, and trade bodies to deliberate on emerging challenges, including potential disruptions in shipping routes, vessel schedules, and cargo flows. Discussions focused on ensuring continuity of operations, minimizing delays, and maintaining supply chain resilience.



Stakeholders shared on-ground insights and highlighted the measures being undertaken to manage evolving conditions, particularly with respect to export-import cargo movements to and from Middle East destinations.

In his address, the Union Minister for Port, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, stated, "Under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the Government of India and the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways have taken swift and coordinated measures to safeguard the nation's maritime trade amid the evolving situation in the Middle East. Our ports have demonstrated resilience and capability in responding to emerging challenges—whether through efficient handling of diverted vessels along the western coast, humanitarian assistance extended to international crew, or proactive trade facilitation measures implemented at key ports such as Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority."

He further added, "We remain in constant coordination with all stakeholders, ensuring real-time monitoring, seamless cargo movement, and minimal disruption to supply chains. India's maritime sector continues to stand strong, responsive, and fully equipped to handle global uncertainties while supporting the nation's economic momentum."



India has sought to reassure global markets that its maritime trade remains stable and resilient despite ongoing tensions in the Middle East. Backed by strong infrastructure and coordinated efforts, the country's ports continue to operate efficiently, positioning India as a dependable trade partner amid evolving global uncertainties.

Gaurav Dayal, Chairperson, JNPA, along with Ravish Kumar Singh, highlighted the initiatives taken by JNPA over the last 20 days and how those measures are proving effective.

JNPA first constituted a task force comprising the Joint DGFT, Additional Commissioner Customs, CGM (Traffic) JNPA, and Deputy Nautical Advisor for coordination and communication related to trade disruptions arising from the evolving geopolitical situation in the Middle East.

JNPA has implemented several facilitation measures, including temporary transshipment storage for Middle East-bound cargo; allocation of additional storage areas at terminals where required; facilitation of ad-hoc vessel calls for moving Middle East cargo to ports such as Fujairah and Khor Fakkan in the UAE and Sohar, Muscat, and Salalah in Oman; and priority handling for perishable cargo and export cargo returning from the Middle East.

An important facilitation measure has been taken by Customs authorities at JNCH, enabling BTT movement of export cargo even in cases where the Export General Manifest (EGM) has not been filed. Where container seals are intact, permission will be granted after basic verification. Containers at CPP require only e-seal verification, while those at Container Freight Stations undergo limited inspection linked to the shipping bill. The usual detailed physical examination has been waived, and any BTT-related fees or penalties have also been waived.

Further, JNPA has facilitated 100% waiver on ground rent/dwell time charges for up to 15 days (February 28 to March 14) for eligible containers, along with 80% waiver on reefer plug-in charges for stranded reefer containers carrying perishable cargo. This is in addition to free

anchorage for vessels waiting for transit to the Middle East.

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority currently has adequate storage capacity available, with only around 50% of the port's container holding space presently occupied.

Over the past 20 days, approximately 16,000 TEUs containers have been dispatched from the port to Middle East destinations, and around 1,700 TEUs have been taken back to town. During this period, the number of vessels at anchorage has significantly reduced from 9 to 4, indicating improved vessel clearance and operational efficiency. As of March 18, there are approximately 25,000 TEUs of transshipment containers unloaded for temporary storage at the port. The number of stranded containers has reduced from around 5,000 TEUs on March 1 to nearly 2,500 TEUs, while perishable export cargo has reduced from around 2,000 TEUs to approximately 800 TEUs as of March 16.

### **About Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)**

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority, commissioned in 1989, is India's largest container port and a key gateway for the country's international trade. The port operates five container terminals and handles a significant share of India's containerised EXIM cargo. JNPA also manages a multi-product Special Economic Zone (SEZ) aimed at boosting export-led industrial growth.

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