

**Opening Remarks by Shri Sushil Mansing Khopde, IPS
Additional Director General of Maritime Administration
National Port Security Conference 2026**

Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal Ji,
Dr. Rajendra Kumar, IAS, Secretary (Border Management), Ministry of Home Affairs,
Shri Vijay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways,
Director General of Maritime Administration Shri Shyam Jagannathan Ji,
Distinguished officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Ports, Shipping
and Waterways, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, CISF, State Maritime Boards, Port
Authorities, industry leaders, and esteemed delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to welcome all of you to the **National Port Security Conference 2026**, a conference that brings together stakeholders from across the **maritime security ecosystem** to deliberate upon one of the most critical responsibilities of any maritime nation: **securing its ports, protecting its people, and safeguarding its maritime interests.**

India today stands at the threshold of a new maritime era. Our ports handle growing volumes of trade, our maritime infrastructure is expanding rapidly, and our aspirations under Maritime India Vision and the broader national development agenda continue to grow stronger. As our maritime footprint expands, our responsibility to ensure safety and security also grows proportionately.

However, when we speak about maritime security, we must remember that at the centre of every ship, every port facility, every voyage, and every maritime operation stands a human being.

That human being is the seafarer.

The Indian seafarer carries the flag and reputation of our country across the oceans of the world. Much like our **armed forces guard our borders, seafarers sustain our economic lifelines** by ensuring the uninterrupted movement of global trade. They work in remote waters, away from their families, often facing uncertain weather, geopolitical risks, security threats, and operational challenges.

Therefore, maritime security is not merely about fences, surveillance systems, compliance audits, or regulations.

At its core, maritime security is about **trust**.

It is about ensuring that every Indian seafarer feels that the nation stands behind him.

It is about ensuring that every vessel entering an Indian port operates in a safe and secure environment.

It is about assuring the global maritime community that India remains a reliable, responsible, and secure maritime nation.

The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, or ISPS Code, provides the global framework for achieving this objective. **For more than two decades, India has faithfully implemented the requirements of the ISPS Code and strengthened security across ships and port facilities serving international trade.**

Today, all eligible **EXIM port facilities in India are operating under the ISPS framework** and are contributing towards a secure maritime environment.

Over the years, DGMA has adopted a focused and progressive approach towards strengthening maritime security. Our efforts have been directed towards improving ISPS compliance, enhancing the quality and periodic review of security plans, promoting regular audits and security drills, strengthening port security infrastructure and surveillance systems, and building greater capacity through training, coordination, and the adoption of modern technologies. These priorities continue to guide our efforts as we work towards a more secure, resilient, and future-ready maritime security framework for the country.

Yet maritime security is an evolving challenge.

Traditional threats are now accompanied by cyber risks, geopolitical uncertainties, organised crime, and emerging technologies that demand continuous adaptation and preparedness. This conference has therefore been carefully designed to discuss emerging threats, cybersecurity, compliance, best practices, inter-agency coordination, and future preparedness.

In this context, the **Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)** assumes great significance.

The Bureau of Port Security has been conceived as a dedicated institutional framework to strengthen port facility security, enhance coordination among agencies, improve compliance oversight, and build a resilient maritime security architecture for the future. The proposed framework envisages stronger regulation of port facility security, approval and review of security plans, security audits, capacity building, and dissemination of security information among stakeholders.

Complementing these efforts, CISF has also been designated as a Recognised Security Organisation (RSO) for port facilities, strengthening the national port

security framework through security assessments, preparation and review of port security plans, and security audits. The security framework follows a structured and risk-based approach, wherein every notified port facility undertakes a Port Facility Security Assessment (PFSA) and implements an approved Port Facility Security Plan (PFSP) under the supervision of a designated Port Facility Security Officer (PFSO), working in coordination with various security and stakeholder agencies. This collaborative framework is helping to strengthen security preparedness and promote uniform implementation of security measures across Indian ports.

But beyond structures, rules, and institutions lies an even more important objective. These institutions must create **confidence**.

Confidence among seafarers.

Confidence among port workers.

Confidence among shipping companies.

Confidence among investors.

And confidence among the citizens of India.

Every seafarer boarding a vessel from an Indian port should know that the country's maritime security system is working to protect him.

Every family waiting for a loved one at sea should know that the Government of India is committed to creating secure ports and safe shipping.

Every port facility should know that it is part of a coordinated national security framework that is alert, prepared, and responsive.

As we gather today with representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, CISF, State Maritime Boards, Port Authorities and the maritime industry, one thing is evident: maritime security is a shared responsibility. No single agency or organisation can address these challenges alone. Effective security depends on close coordination, timely information sharing, and a common understanding of emerging risks. Conferences such as this provide an important platform for bringing all stakeholders together, exchanging experiences, and strengthening our collective preparedness for the future.

Ultimately, our objective is simple. We must ensure that India's ports remain secure, our shipping remains safe, and our maritime sector continues to support the country's economic growth and national security. At the same time, we must ensure that every Indian seafarer who sails from our shores carries with him the confidence that the nation is committed to his safety, welfare and security. The National Port Security Committee and the Bureau of Port Security have an important role in

building that confidence and strengthening the trust that seafarers place in our maritime system

I am confident that the discussions and deliberations during today's conference will further strengthen our collective understanding of the challenges before us and help identify practical measures to enhance port security and maritime resilience.

As we move forward, it is important that the trust of our seafarers remains central to our efforts. Our seafarers work in demanding environments and play a vital role in supporting global trade and the nation's maritime interests. They should have the confidence that the systems and institutions responsible for maritime security are working in their interest and are committed to their safety and welfare.

The National Port Security Conference provides an important opportunity for all stakeholders to work together towards this objective. With continued cooperation, coordination, and commitment, I am confident that we will further strengthen the security of our ports, support our seafarers, and contribute to a safe, secure, and efficient maritime sector.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.