

www.samsaragroup.com Week 44, 2026 (Oct 24 – Oct 30)

Policy & Economy News

- **Domestic Demand Drives India's Steel Sector in H1 FY27**
- **India Approves ₹1,857-Crore (Rs.18.5 billion) Khelo India Scheme to Boost Sports Goods Manufacturing and Exports**
- **Strong demand drives India's Q2 growth as Finance Ministry estimates India's July-September growth at 7.35%**

Business News – The India Boom Factor

- **India's Textile Industry Targets US$ 350 Billion by 2030 as Exports Recover**
- **India's Petroleum Product Exports Rise 31.9% in September to $6.22 Billion**
- **Goyal Urges Exporters to Diversify Markets, Leverage FTAs to Boost India's Exports**
- **India's pharma exports rise 4.9% to USD 16.14 bn in H1; shipments to Europe up nearly 10%: Pharmexcil**

Shipping News

- **Gujarat's ₹71,000 crore (Rs.710 billion) coastal mega plan: Shipyards to come up at four locations, including Porbandar; six new ports approved as new policy takes effect**
- **HMM to deploy proposed new 13,000 TEU containerships on its Far East-India-Mediterranean service**
- **Wan Hai Lines to Launch New Intra-Asia Shipping Service Connecting Western India in November**

Logistics News

- **Cabinet Approves Rs 10,000 Crore (Rs.100 billion) Scheme To Boost Container Manufacturing**
- **Indian Railways to Launch Door-to-Door Parcel Services in Eight Cities**

Indian Port News

- **Maharashtra Plans Mega Chemical Park Near Vadhvan Port**
- **Vizhinjam Logistics Plan Targets 930 Acres**
- **V.O. Chidambaranar Port Crosses 25 Million Tonnes in Cargo Handling, Sets New Operational Records**

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Policy & Economy News

Domestic Demand Drives India's Steel Sector in H1 FY27

October 26, 2026

India's steel sector recorded steady growth in the first half of FY27, driven by domestic demand, according to the Ministry of Steel. Finished steel consumption rose 7.6% year-on-year (YoY) to 85 million tonnes (Mt) in April–September FY27. Over the same period, crude steel production increased 2.9% to 85.1 Mt and finished steel production grew 4.1% to 82 Mt.

In September 2026 alone, finished steel consumption rose 7.7% YoY to 14.4 Mt. The country's crude steel capacity stood at 223 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa). Alloy steel production grew 32% to 5.83 Mt. Finished steel exports increased 26.2% to 3.55 Mt, with export value rising 28.9% to Rs. 28,263.7 crore (US$ 2.98 billion). The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Vietnam and Italy were the top export destinations.

The Ministry of Steel has prepared the draft National Steel Policy (Vision 2047), which targets crude steel capacity of 604 Mt, per capita consumption of 302 kg and exports of 45 Mt by 2047. The policy also aims to reduce emission intensity from 2.54 to about 1.54 tonnes of carbon dioxide per tonne of crude steel.

MOIL Limited recorded its highest-ever first-half manganese ore production of 0.96 Mt, surpassing its previous record of 0.943 Mt. Under the Green Steel Initiative, 104 steel producers have been issued Green Steel Certificates up to October 2026, and most certified products have received 5-star ratings. NMDC and Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) have also set up subsidiaries at GIFT City. These include NMDC Global IFSC Limited, which will serve as an investment platform for overseas critical mineral projects.

India Approves ₹1,857-Crore (Rs.18.5 billion) Khelo India Scheme to Boost Sports Goods Manufacturing and Exports

October 29, 2026

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has welcomed the Union Cabinet's approval of the ₹1,857-crore (Rs.18.5 billion) Khelo India Sports Goods Manufacturing Scheme, aimed at strengthening domestic production, reducing import dependence, generating employment and expanding India's presence in the global sports goods market.

The scheme is expected to attract investments of around ₹6,800 crore (Rs.68 billion) and will run from 2026 to FY2034, with a focus on developing India into a globally competitive hub for sports goods manufacturing.

Highlighting the initiative's potential, Modi said the scheme would promote dedicated manufacturing zones, encourage investments, support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and advance research, innovation and skill development. The initiative also aims to improve product quality and enhance the export competitiveness of Indian sports goods.

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A key component of the scheme is the development of Sports Goods Manufacturing Zones (SGMZs), where domestic and international manufacturers, sports brands and retail chains will be encouraged to establish production facilities. Under the Anchor Investment Support component, leading manufacturers and brands will be incentivised to set up units in these designated zones.

The scheme also envisages establishing Centres of Excellence at leading educational and research institutions to drive innovation in sports equipment, materials science, protective gear and advanced manufacturing technologies. These facilities are expected to strengthen product development and help Indian manufacturers meet international quality and performance standards.

In addition, the government plans to leverage the Export Promotion Mission to improve international branding, expand market access and increase exports of Indian sports goods.

The initiative is expected to provide fresh momentum to the government's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat programmes while creating opportunities across manufacturing, research, technology and allied industries.

With investment promotion, specialised manufacturing infrastructure and export-oriented support at its core, the scheme seeks to strengthen India's domestic sports goods ecosystem and improve its competitiveness in international markets.

Strong demand drives India’s Q2 growth as Finance Ministry estimates India’s July-September growth at 7.35%

October 29, 2026

India’s economy is estimated to have grown by 7.35 per cent in the July-September quarter (Q2) of the current financial year (FY27), supported by sustained domestic demand, strong industrial activity, and higher consumption levels, according to the Ministry of Finance’s October Monthly Economic Review released on Thursday. Notably, the International Monetary Fund has projected India’s economy to grow by 7.0 per cent in FY27, while the World Bank, OECD and Reserve Bank of India have forecast growth of 7.1 per cent.

Latest growth estimate of India

The latest growth estimate, derived from the Department of Economic Affairs’ nowcasting model introduced in the Economic Survey 2025–26, follows an expansion of 7.8 per cent recorded in the April-June quarter (Q1 FY27). The current 7.35 per cent projection reflects an upward revision from the ministry’s earlier estimate of around 7.3 per cent outlined in its September review.

“Following real GDP growth of 7.8 per cent in Q1 FY27, the Department’s nowcasting model, introduced in the Economic Survey 2025-26, nowcasts real GDP growth of 7.35 per cent in Q2 FY27,” the report stated.

Several key economic indicators of GDP growth story

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The review highlighted that several key economic indicators, including industrial production, electricity consumption, port traffic, GST collections and automobile sales, recorded stronger growth during the second quarter.

“Taken together, these indicators point to sustained growth momentum in Q2 FY27,” it said.

Gross GST collections grew by around 15 per cent during the July-September quarter, compared with approximately 8.4 per cent in the preceding quarter. Domestic automobile sales also increased by around 25 per cent year-on-year, supported by demand across rural and urban markets.

The report noted that business activity showed signs of improvement towards the end of the quarter, with manufacturing and services activity strengthening in September.

“The recovery in PMI readings, alongside improved business sentiment, points to a cautiously favourable outlook for the coming months,” it said. On the outlook for the remainder of FY27, the ministry said domestic consumption, investment activity and structural reforms were expected to support economic growth.

“Healthy credit growth and recent trade agreements are expected to provide additional support to consumption, investment and exports,” the review stated. However, the ministry cautioned that global uncertainties, including higher crude oil prices, geopolitical tensions and inflationary pressures, could continue to pose challenges.

Business News – The India Boom Factor

India’s Textile Industry Targets US$ 350 Billion by 2030 as Exports Recover

October 27, 2026

India’s textile industry expanded to nearly Rs. 16.79 lakh crore (US$ 190 billion) in FY26 and aims to reach Rs. 33.27 lakh crore (US$ 350 billion) by 2030, driven by domestic demand, manufacturing investments and export opportunities, according to a report by Rubix Data Sciences.

The sector remains a significant employment generator, while the Central Government is considering a five-year Textile Expansion and Employment (TEEM) Scheme with an outlay of Rs. 40,000 crore (US$ 4.21 billion) to modernise machinery, introduce advanced technologies and upgrade traditional textile clusters. Textile exports, including handicrafts, grew by 10.30% year-on-year during April–August 2026, following a 2.70% decline to Rs. 3.17 lakh crore (US$ 35.80 billion) in FY26. Imports increased by 17.10% to Rs. 84,835.2 crore (US$ 9.60 billion) in FY26, although exports remained nearly 3.7 times the value of imports. Readymade garments accounted for 44% of exports, while man-made fibre textiles contributed 15%.

Despite the recovery in exports, the industry faces rising input costs and international trade uncertainties. Cotton yarn prices increased by approximately 60% to Rs. 400 per kilogram in September 2026 from Rs. 250 per kilogram in early 2026, amid a decline in domestic cotton

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production to 290.91 lakh bales in the 2025-26 season. The government extended relief to mills through an exemption from the 11% cotton import duty until October 31, 2026.

The United States remained India's largest textile export destination in FY26, accounting for 31% of shipments, followed by the European Union at nearly 16%. However, exports to the US declined by around 7%, while shipments to major European markets increased by 9%. Manufacturers are diversifying export destinations to reduce market concentration. Meanwhile, investment proposals under the seven approved PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks reached Rs. 68,590 crore (US$ 7.21 billion) by August 2026, supporting capacity expansion and modernisation.

India's Petroleum Product Exports Rise 31.9% in September to $6.22 Billion

October 28, 2026

India's petroleum-product exports were estimated at $6.22 billion in September 2026, registering a 31.9% year-on-year increase from $4.71 billion in September 2025, despite a sequential decline from the previous two months.

Exports stood at $6.92 billion in July and $6.81 billion in August, indicating a moderation in export earnings in September after two stronger months.

The figures cover petroleum products as a whole and do not specify diesel exports separately, either in value or shipment volume. Therefore, the September estimate does not indicate the quantity of diesel exported during the month.

India's petroleum-product exports remain an important component of the country's energy trade, with domestic refining capacity supporting supplies to international markets.

Speaking at a forum in New Delhi on September 24, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stressed the importance of honouring export commitments.

"Once we have made a commitment to export, it is important that we honour that commitment," Puri said.

The September figures highlight continued year-on-year growth in petroleum-product export earnings, even as monthly export values eased from the levels recorded in July and August.

Goyal Urges Exporters to Diversify Markets, Leverage FTAs to Boost India's Exports

October 29, 2026

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has called on Indian exporters to identify sector-specific export opportunities, diversify markets and products, and adopt data-driven strategies to strengthen the country's global trade competitiveness.

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Addressing representatives of Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and industry chambers during a review of the country's export performance, Goyal highlighted the need for closer coordination among EPCs, industry associations, state governments and the field formations of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

The minister noted that the global trade environment is undergoing rapid changes due to geopolitical uncertainties, shifting tariff structures, supply chain realignments and evolving regulatory requirements in major international markets. While these developments present challenges, they also offer opportunities for India to emerge as a reliable and competitive global trading partner.

Goyal urged EPCs to engage proactively with their international counterparts, identify potential buyers and facilitate business partnerships across established and emerging markets. He also called for sector-specific assessments of export opportunities and greater awareness among exporters about trade preferences, international standards and market-entry requirements.

Focus on market diversification and trade intelligence

The minister emphasised the importance of identifying products with untapped export potential and exploring new destinations in response to changing global demand and emerging supply chain opportunities.

He also called for a more outcome-oriented approach to export promotion, supported by timely market intelligence, monitoring of international trade trends and closer coordination with exporters to resolve operational bottlenecks.

According to industry officials, Goyal encouraged exporters to make greater use of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), expand their participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions, and plan their engagement in such events three to five years in advance.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were also urged to increase their presence at global trade fairs and exhibitions and make greater use of funding available under the ₹25,060-crore (RS.250.6 billion) Export Promotion Mission (EPM).

The mission's Market Access Support programme provides targeted financial assistance for market- development activities, including participation in international exhibitions, Buyer-Seller Meets, Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets and focused trade delegations.

FTAs offer opportunities for Indian exporters

India has implemented trade agreements with several partners and blocs in recent years, including Australia, Mauritius, the UAE, Oman, the United Kingdom, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) bloc and New Zealand.

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These agreements offer preferential market access for Indian goods, with zero-duty access available for many products, subject to the applicable agreements, product coverage and rules of origin.

Participation in international trade fairs can help Indian companies connect with overseas buyers, identify new markets, establish business relationships and secure export orders. Such events also provide insights into global demand, pricing, quality standards and emerging product trends, helping exporters improve their competitiveness and integrate into international supply chains.

Merchandise exports rise 18.51% in April-September

India's merchandise exports increased 18.51% year-on-year to USD 259.89 billion during April-September of FY2026-27, while merchandise imports rose 16.31% to USD 437.53 billion.

The merchandise trade deficit widened to USD 177.64 billion during the first half of the fiscal year, compared with USD 156.88 billion in the corresponding period of FY2025-26.

Meanwhile, estimated services exports increased to USD 216.31 billion during April-September 2026-27, up from USD 199.02 billion a year earlier.

Combined exports of goods and services are estimated at USD 476.2 billion during the first half of the current fiscal year. India recorded total exports of USD 863 billion in FY2025-26, and the Commerce Ministry has set a target of USD 1 trillion in combined goods and services exports for FY2026-27.

The government's renewed emphasis on market diversification, trade intelligence, FTA utilisation and international market access is aimed at helping Indian exporters capture emerging opportunities and sustain export growth amid an evolving global trade landscape.

India's pharma exports rise 4.9% to USD 16.14 bn in H1; shipments to Europe up nearly 10%: Pharmexcil

October 30, 2026

India’s pharmaceutical exports grew nearly 5% to Rs. 1.53 lakh crore (US$ 16.13 billion) in the first half of FY27, according to data released by the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil). Growth was driven by strong demand from Europe, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Latin America.

In the second quarter of FY27, outbound shipments increased 3.05% to Rs. 76,145.73 crore (US$ 8.04 billion). September recorded the highest monthly export value of Rs. 25,988.52 crore (US$ 2.74 billion), up 4.68% year-on-year (YoY).

Exports to Europe rose 9.66% to Rs. 31,142.75 crore (US$ 3.29 billion), accounting for 20.38% of total pharmaceutical exports. Shipments to the ASEAN region grew 21.54%, Latin America and the Caribbean rose 16.58%, and Africa increased 6.48%, helping sustain overall export growth.

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Drug formulations and biologicals remained the largest export segment, accounting for 73.84% of total shipments and growing 3.81%. Bulk drugs and drug intermediates rose 12.07%, and surgical exports climbed 9.53%. Chairman of Pharmexcil Mr. Namit Joshi stated that India has established a global reputation for quality, affordable medicines and large-scale manufacturing, and that the next phase of growth must focus on moving up the value chain.

Europe presents significant opportunities for the co-development of complex generics, biosimilars and specialised therapies. Vice Chairman of Pharmexcil Mr. Bhavin Mehta noted that double-digit growth in bulk drugs and intermediates reflects the breadth of domestic manufacturing capabilities. Continued investment in quality systems will support greater global participation by Indian exporters.

Shipping News

Gujarat's ₹71,000 crore (Rs.710 billion) coastal mega plan: Shipyards to come up at four locations, including Porbandar; six new ports approved as new policy takes effect

October 24, 2026

With the aim of strengthening India's presence in the global marine and shipbuilding sectors, the Gujarat government has officially begun implementing the Shipbuilding and Repair Policy of Gujarat 2026.

₹58,953 crore (Rs.589.5 billion) investment planned for shipbuilding and repair clusters

The Gujarat Maritime Board has initiated efforts to establish greenfield shipbuilding and ship repair clusters along the state's coastline, involving a capital investment of ₹58,953 crore (Rs.589.5 billion).

Following the completion of scientific pre-feasibility studies, these large-scale projects will be developed at four key coastal locations in Gujarat.

Six new ports approved at a cost of ₹12,320 crore (Rs.,123.2 billion)

In a further push to maritime trade, approval has also been granted for the development of six new, state-of-the-art greenfield ports at an estimated cost of ₹12,320 crore (Rs.123.2 billion).

Modern shipyards planned in Bhavnagar, southern Saurashtra and western maritime corridor

The Bhavnagar-Ghogha-Vadhera-Mithapur cluster will house a shipyard spread across 535 hectares, with a 2.4-km waterfront. Located amid the existing marine ecosystem, it will have an annual capacity of 0.6 million to 0.8 million gross tonnes (GT).

Another shipyard with the same annual capacity will be established along the southern Saurashtra coast. It will initially cover 250 hectares, with scope for expansion to 300 hectares, and have a 5-km-long waterfront.

The facility will benefit from connectivity to National Highway 51, the railway network and Amreli Airport.

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Meanwhile, a modern shipyard with an annual capacity of 0.6 million to 0.8 million GT will be developed in the Western Maritime Corridor. It will cover 260 hectares and have a 2.3-km waterfront.

Integrated industrial clusters to support shipbuilding and maritime industries

According to IAS officer Ajaykumar, MD and CMO of the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), the projects will extend beyond shipbuilding to create a complete industrial cluster.

The facilities will include offshore fabrication units, dry docks, marine equipment manufacturing facilities, research and development (R&D) centres, testing facilities and skill development centres.

Mathematical modelling, bathymetric surveys and geotechnical surveys for the projects have been completed by IIT Kharagpur.

Six new ports to add 124 MMTPA cargo-handling capacity

With six new ports becoming operational in Gujarat, the state's annual cargo-handling capacity is expected to increase by approximately 124 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA).

New greenfield ports planned as industrial, energy and EXIM gateways

Among the new ports planned under the initiative, a port near the Mundra Maritime Corridor will serve as a major industrial gateway for western Gujarat, with an annual cargo-handling capacity of more than 15 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) for coal, minerals and petrochemicals.

A separate facility with a capacity of 15 MMTPA will handle cement and chemical products. Another port, connected to the Bhogat single-point mooring (SPM) facility and pipeline network, will serve as the state's main energy port, with a capacity of 15 MMTPA for liquid cargo and petroleum products.

In addition, a bulk cargo gateway port with a capacity of more than 15 MMTPA will support textile and export-import (EXIM) trade. A separate port in southern Gujarat, with a capacity of 15 MMTPA, will handle bulk commodities and minerals.

HMM to deploy proposed new 13,000 TEU containerships on its Far East-India-Mediterranean service

October 25, 2026

HMM has announced that it placed a newbuilding order for eight 13,000 TEU containerships with HD Hyundai.

The eight newbuildings will be built to LNG dual-fuel specifications, with the total contract value amounting to approximately KRW 2 trillion. Under the contract, the vessels will be built by HD Hyundai Heavy Industries and HD Hyundai Samho, with deliveries scheduled to begin sequentially from 2029.

HMM plans to deploy the newly acquired vessels on its flagship FIM (Far East-India-Mediterranean) service route to enhance operational efficiency on its core trade lanes.

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In addition to this order, HMM has acquired four feeder vessels through resale agreements, comprising three 2,800 TEU ships and one 1,700 TEU ship. The feeder vessels will be integrated into emerging regional feeder networks linked to major hub ports, reinforcing the company's 'Hub & Spoke' network competitiveness.

With this latest vessel acquisition, HMM's total investments this year in fleet expansion, logistics infrastructure and future technologies have reached approximately KRW 6 trillion.

Moving forward, HMM intends to maintain its strategic investment approach to achieve qualitative growth and structural improvement, as per a communique.

Wan Hai Lines to Launch New Intra-Asia Shipping Service Connecting Western India in November

October 30, 2026

Wan Hai Lines Ltd. is expanding its presence in the Indian market with the launch of a new intra-Asia shipping service in late November 2026, strengthening connectivity between western India and key markets across Southeast and East Asia.

The new service will connect Vietnam, southern China, Malaysia and western India, deploying container vessels with capacities ranging from 2,800 to 3,000 TEUs. The service will operate on a 35- day rotation, according to Taiwanese media reports.

The port rotation will cover Haiphong, Qinzhou, Nansha, Shekou, Port Klang, Mundra and Nhava Sheva, before returning to Port Klang and Haiphong.

The new route is expected to complement Wan Hai's existing network and enhance container shipping connectivity between major Asian manufacturing and trading centres and India's west coast gateways.

The expansion comes amid improving intra-Asia shipping demand. Wan Hai reported consolidated revenue of NT$21.8 billion (approximately US$669 million) in September 2026, representing a 97.63% increase year-on-year. Its revenue for the first nine months of the year reached NT$136.2 billion, up 27.28% compared with the corresponding period last year.

The company said cargo demand had recovered more strongly than in previous years following China's National Day holiday in early October, as manufacturing and shipping activities gradually resumed. Cargo owners are also arranging shipments earlier than usual to mitigate supply chain uncertainties arising from port congestion, shipping delays and fluctuating fuel costs.

With the fourth quarter traditionally marking the peak season for intra-Asia short-sea shipping, Wan Hai expects its operating momentum to remain stable, supported by growing cargo volumes and relatively favourable freight rates.

The new service is expected to provide additional shipping options for exporters and importers while strengthening trade links between western India and key Asian markets.

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Logistics News

Cabinet Approves Rs 10,000 Crore (Rs.100 billion) Scheme To Boost Container Manufacturing

October 28, 2026

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the Container Manufacturing Promotion Scheme (CMPS) with a budgetary outlay of Rs 10,000 crore (Rs.100 billion) up to FY 2039- 40.

The scheme aims to generate an estimated 3,000 direct jobs and over 50,000 indirect jobs, while supporting ancillary industries such as corner castings, specialised steel, wooden frames and paints.

The scheme envisages establishing a globally competitive container manufacturing ecosystem in India, reducing import dependence and strengthening supply-chain resilience. The scheme is intended to support new manufacturing facilities as well as expansion of existing container manufacturing units.

The Scheme for Container Manufacturing was announced in the Union Budget 2026-27.

Among the major components is Interest Subvention Assistance (ISA) with a financial outlay of Rs 859 crore (Rs.8.5 billion) to provide Interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum on eligible term loans (capital loans) availed by container manufacturers for setting up greenfield container manufacturing facilities and Brownfield expansion of existing container manufacturing capacities.

It also has operational expenditure assistance (OEA) with a financial outlay of Rs 8,891 crore (Rs.88.9 billion) to provide financial assistance for all containers manufactured as per global shipping standards and sold by eligible container manufacturers.

This would help bridge the cost gap and improve the competitiveness of domestically manufactured containers, according to an official statement.

Another component is testing and certification assistance with a financial outlay of Rs 150 crore (Rs.1.5 billion) to support setting up of common facilities such as Dynamic longitudinal impact testing, etc.

This will increase annual domestic container manufacturing capacity by around ten-fold, up to 7.5 lakh TEUs, create an internationally competitive manufacturing base, with potential to position India as a global export hub for quality shipping containers, and strengthen resilience of India's maritime and logistics supply chains, according to the Cabinet.

Indian Railways to Launch Door-to-Door Parcel Services in Eight Cities

October 28, 2026

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Indian Railways is set to expand its parcel logistics services with the launch of a door-to-door parcel delivery facility in eight major Indian cities, following a successful pilot run. The service, branded Rail Parcel App - Ghar se Ghar Tak, will enable customers to book parcel pickups and deliveries from their doorstep, while Indian Railways will provide transportation between railway stations.

The service will initially cover Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Pune. The initiative aims to make rail-based parcel transportation more accessible to individual customers and businesses by integrating railway freight services with first-mile pickup and last-mile delivery.

Under the proposed operating model, selected logistics service providers will collect consignments from customers and deliver them to their final destinations. Indian Railways will handle the middle-mile transportation between designated railway stations. Logistics partners may also provide packaging and other value-added services, offering customers an integrated parcel logistics solution.

Online Booking and Digital Payments

The Rail Parcel App will function as a digital marketplace connecting customers with approved logistics service providers. Customers will be able to book consignments and make payments online, eliminating the need to transport parcels to railway premises or complete conventional booking formalities at stations.

According to a senior railway official quoted by The Economic Times, the booking window will open 15 days before the scheduled departure of the train carrying the consignment. Customers will be able to book shipments up to one day before departure, while logistics partners can hand over consignments to railway staff up to one hour before the train leaves.

The digital platform is expected to simplify the booking process and improve the integration of collection, railway transportation and final delivery. By combining the railway network with private logistics providers, the service seeks to extend the reach of rail-based parcel transportation beyond traditional station-to-station operations.

Cancellation and Refund Provisions

Indian Railways will provide a refund of the rail freight component if a booking is cancelled before the consignment is picked up, after deducting a clerkage charge of ₹10.

Refunds for first-mile pickup and last-mile delivery will be subject to the respective logistics service providers' policies. The applicable terms and conditions will be communicated to customers during the booking process.

Railways Expands Parcel Logistics Offerings

The proposed rollout forms part of Indian Railways' broader efforts to expand its parcel business, improve freight utilisation and strengthen multimodal logistics connectivity.

Earlier in October, the Railway Board introduced a discounted round-trip booking arrangement for parcel coaches ahead of the Diwali and Christmas festive season, when demand for goods transportation typically increases.

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Under the arrangement, parcel aggregators can book a round trip at 1.5 times the one-way freight rate, reducing the combined charge by 25% compared with paying the one-way rate separately for both journeys. The concession is limited to the specified booking arrangement and does not represent a general reduction in railway parcel freight rates.

Strengthening India's Multimodal Logistics Network

The door-to-door parcel initiative brings together rail transportation and road-based collection and delivery services through a digitally enabled platform. It is intended to make railway parcel services more convenient for retail customers, small businesses and other shippers seeking alternatives to conventional road-based logistics.

For the logistics sector, the initiative represents another step towards integrating different modes of transportation and improving access to India's extensive railway network. The combination of rail- based middle-mile movement and logistics partners' first- and last-mile capabilities could help streamline parcel handling and broaden the customer base for railway freight services.

The initial rollout will cover the eight identified cities, with the service offering customers a digital route to access railway parcel transportation without having to manage the station-level logistics themselves.

Indian Port News

Maharashtra Plans Mega Chemical Park Near Vadhvan Port

October 24, 2026

Maharashtra plans to develop a mega chemical industrial park spanning 2,500 to 5,000 acres near the upcoming Vadhvan Port in Palghar district, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced on Thursday, positioning the port as a key driver of the state's industrial and chemical sector growth.

Speaking at the inauguration of India Chem 2026 in Goregaon, Mumbai, Fadnavis said the state would seek the Centre's approval for the proposed park under the BHAVYA Rasayan scheme. He said the Vadhvan Port, expected to be ready in about three years, would create significant opportunities for developing chemical industry clusters and supporting infrastructure.

The proposed park is part of the Centre's initiative to establish three chemical parks across the country through a competitive selection process. Under the scheme, each park must have at least 2,000 acres of contiguous land and provide common infrastructure, including effluent treatment facilities, pipeline networks, logistics and warehousing.

Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister J.P. Nadda said the Centre would provide ₹1,000 crore (Rs.10 billion) towards the initiative, while the state government would contribute ₹500 crore (Rs.5 billion). The Centre would also facilitate environmental clearances for the selected projects.

Vadhvan Port is being developed as an all-weather, deep-draft greenfield major port by Vadhavan Port Project Ltd, a joint venture of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) and the Maharashtra Maritime Board. Approved by the Union Cabinet in June 2024, the project envisages nine container terminals, four multipurpose berths and four liquid cargo berths, with an annual

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cargo-handling capacity of 298 million tonnes, including around 23.2 million TEUs. Road connectivity to national highways and rail links to the existing network and the upcoming Dedicated Freight Corridor are also planned.

Fadnavis said the port, along with JNPA, India's largest container port, would strengthen Maharashtra's position as a major destination for chemical manufacturing and exports.

Maharashtra currently has around 3,600 chemical-sector units, accounting for 19% of the sector's gross value added and 17% of chemical exports, while employing approximately three lakh people, according to the Chief Minister. He said employment in the sector could double as investment and industrial development expand.

Nadda said India's chemical industry, currently valued at around $220 billion, aims to reach $1 trillion by 2040. Improved connectivity and infrastructure would be important to achieving this target. He also noted that advanced chemicals and petrochemicals had been included in the Centre's ₹1 lakh crore (Rs.1 trillion) research, development and innovation scheme.

However, the proposed development will need to account for environmental considerations. Dahanu taluka, where Vadhvan Port is being developed, was declared an ecologically fragile area under a 1991 Central Government notification issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, imposing restrictions on environmentally harmful industries.

Fadnavis also said Maharashtra's chemical industry policy was in its final stages and would be released in the first week of November. The state is seeking to streamline approvals through its Maitri single- window platform and the Invest Maharashtra initiative to attract investment and accelerate industrial growth.

Vizhinjam Logistics Plan Targets 930 Acres

October 24, 2026

Kerala has identified around 930 acres for logistics infrastructure linked to Vizhinjam seaport, with acquisition proceedings under way for 230 acres as the state seeks to address limited warehousing capacity and high rental costs in Thiruvananthapuram district.

The details were disclosed by chief minister V D Satheesan in reply to an unstarred question raised by BJP MLAs V Muraleedharan, Rajeev Chandrasekhar and B B Gopakumar. The government acknowledged that warehouse facilities in areas surrounding the port remain limited, while high land prices and inadequate storage infrastructure have contributed to higher rentals compared with other locations.

Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd (VISL) has identified the 930 acres for logistics requirements. Acquisition proceedings for 230 acres are progressing, while the port company is holding discussions with logistics operators, container freight station operators, warehouse investors and shipping lines.

Kerala State Industrial Enterprises has already started a container freight station at Vizhinjam. Under the state’s 100-day action programme, the agency has also initiated a larger project covering warehousing facilities and a logistics park to support services connected to the container freight station.

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The state is also pursuing Mission Samudra, a plan intended to address shortages of container freight stations, empty container yards and warehouses through private participation. The government is expected to invite expressions of interest from prospective investors and developers for free trade warehousing zones, container freight stations and empty container yards.

To reduce the impact of high land prices, the government is taking steps to identify and acquire land specifically for logistics infrastructure. It is also pursuing a subsidy mechanism that would reduce additional costs arising from expensive land, allowing private developers to lease land at more affordable rates and encouraging investment in local logistics facilities.

The government, however, has ruled out fixing a standard rental rate for private warehouses. Satheesan said rentals would continue to be determined through agreements between warehouse owners and users, based on prevailing market conditions. No proposal to introduce a uniform rate for private warehouse rentals is under consideration.

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Crosses 25 Million Tonnes in Cargo Handling, Sets New Operational Records

October 27, 2026

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VOCPA) has crossed the 25-million-tonne cargo-handling milestone on October 24, 2026, registering growth in cargo and container traffic while setting new records in vessel handling, terminal throughput and rail-based fertiliser movement during FY 2026-27.

The Port handled 25.18 million tonnes of cargo through October 2026, up 3.01% from 24.44 million tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Container traffic also recorded growth, rising 1.76% to 5.02 lakh twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), compared with 4.94 lakh TEUs a year earlier.

Among major cargo segments, coal handling increased by 13.47%, rising from 9,217.90 tonnes to 10,459.94 tonnes. Fertiliser handling rose significantly to 5.70 lakh tonnes from 2.33 lakh tonnes during the corresponding period last year.

New Records in Cargo and Vessel Handling

The Port achieved its highest-ever single-day cargo handling of 2.17 lakh tonnes on September 5, 2026, surpassing its previous record of 2.16 lakh tonnes. It also handled M.V. CMA CGM THORIUM, measuring 335.23 metres in length, making it the longest vessel handled at the Port to date.

Terminal operations delivered further milestones in September. Tuticorin International Container Terminal (TICT), operating at Berth No. 9, handled 33,771 TEUs across 32 vessels, achieving its highest- ever monthly throughput.

Meanwhile, JSW Tuticorin Multipurpose Terminal discharged 43,052 tonnes of coal within 24 hours, exceeding its previous record of 41,853 tonnes and demonstrating improved cargo-handling capacity.

Rail-Based Fertiliser Movement Sets New Benchmarks

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The Port also recorded significant achievements in rail-based fertiliser transportation. On September 29, 2026, it registered its highest-ever single-day fertiliser loading by rail, at 8,061 tonnes, for FACT, KRIBHCO and IPL.

In a separate achievement, Raja Agencies set a single-agent dispatch record by moving 6,376.9 tonnes of fertiliser in 100 railway wagons. The consignments were dispatched to destinations including Haveri, Sannath Nagar, Bellari and Katpadi, highlighting the Port's role in supporting efficient inland cargo connectivity.

Focus on Efficiency and Infrastructure Development

Congratulating port users, shipping lines, terminal operators, trade partners, employees and other Stakeholderrs, Shri Susanta Kumar Purohit, IRSEE, Chairperson of V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority, said the milestone reflected the collective efforts of the Port community.

"Crossing 25 million tonnes of cargo handling is an important milestone for the Port and reflects the collective efforts of our stakeholders. Our priorities remain improving operational efficiency, strengthening rail and maritime connectivity, expanding infrastructure and facilitating seamless cargo movement. These efforts will further strengthen the Port's contribution to India's maritime trade and economic growth," he said.

The latest performance highlights V.O. Chidambaranar Port's continued focus on operational efficiency, infrastructure development and multimodal connectivity, supporting the growth of cargo and container traffic and strengthening its role in India's maritime logistics network.

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