

CTL-BHP 2026 conference explores more critical dimensions of logistics on Day 2

Focus also on impact of the next generation, strategies & compliances, and the benefits of FTAs

BUILDING on the excellent momentum set on the opening day, Day 2 (March 18) of the comprehensive CTL-BHP 2026 conference (March 17-18) delved into a wide range of critical dimensions shaping modern logistics. The focus spanned container shipping, smart infrastructure, key enablers of seamless supply chains, quality warehousing, and, notably, the indispensable role of air cargo in logistics and in reinforcing global supply chains. Once again, the sessions featured an impressive roster of industry titans whose vast experience, expertise, and leadership across segments were evident in their insightful perspectives and thought-provoking deliberations.

The seminars were equally topical and forward-looking. One explored how the next generation—particularly within family-owned enterprises—is driving the logistics sector forward with fresh perspectives and a strong technology-oriented mindset. Another addressed the strategies and

Shipping, Government of India & Chairman, CSC (Conciliation and Settlement Committee) & Event Convener

★ Mr Rajen Shah, Chairman & Managing Director, S J Logistics India Limited

★ Mr Vishal P. Mehta, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Djibouti in Maharashtra, Advisor to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti & CEO, Rushabh Sealink And Logistic Pvt Ltd

★ Mr Dushyant Mulani, Director, Khimji Poonja Freight Forwarders Pvt Ltd & Immediate Past Chairman, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India (FFFAI)

★ Mr Sanjeev Harale, President, Brihanmumbai Custom Brokers



The event was inaugurated on the second day by (from left) Mr Vinet K. Chadha, Mr Rajen Bhatia, Mr Parthasarathy Gopalan, Mr Atit Mahajan, Mr Dushyant Mulani, Mr Vishal P. Mehta, Mr Sanjeev Harale, Mr Rajen Shah and Mr Gopal Krishna. Grabbing attention in the foreground is the humanoid robot 'Prithvi'

compliance frameworks essential for success in international trade. These sessions too were enriched by a distinguished line-up of speakers and panelists, contributing depth and practical relevance to the discussions.

Against the backdrop of India's expanding footprint in global trade, marked by the signing of multiple Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), the sole Masterclass on Day 2 was especially timely and relevant. Titled "Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Advantage for Indian Business in Export & Import," it provided valuable insights into leveraging FTAs to enhance India's competitiveness in international markets.

Earlier, Day 2 of CTL-BHP 2026 was inaugurated by:

★ Mr Gopal Krishna, IAS, Former Shipping Secretary, Ministry of

Association (BCBA) & Founder, Interport Clearing Services

★ Mr Atit Mahajan, MD, CMA CGM Agencies (India) Pvt. Ltd

★ Mr Parthasarathy Gopalan, Managing Director, PIL (India) Pvt. Ltd

★ Mr Rajen Bhatia, Chairman - Western Region, The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI) & Managing Director, Tulsidas Khimji Pvt. Ltd

★ Mr Vinet K. Chadha, Founder and Managing Director, Combined Logistics Solutions Pvt. Ltd

A humanoid robot, 'Prithvi', captured attention at the inauguration, symbolising the era of technological advancement and innovation that defines the industry today.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 2

Inaugural Session – CTL 2026 – Seamless Connectivity through Smart Logistics Infrastructure

The Inaugural Session on Day 2 was graced by:

★ Mr Lenny Abrao, Managing Director, Abrao Group – Session Chairman and Moderator

★ Mr Dushyant Mulani, Director, Khimji Poonja Freight Forwarders Pvt. Ltd & Immediate Past Chairman, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India (FFFAI)

★ Mr Atit Mahajan, MD, CMA CGM Agencies (India) Pvt. Ltd

★ Mr Godwin Xerri, Chairman, Focal Maritime Services Co. Ltd. & Chairman, Worldwide Ship Agencies Association (WWSA)

★ Mr Vishal P. Mehta, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Djibouti in Maharashtra, Advisor to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti & CEO, Rushabh Sealink And Logistic Pvt Ltd

★ Mr Parthasarathy Gopalan, Managing Director, PIL (India) Pvt. Ltd

★ Mr Sanjeev Harale, President, Brihanmumbai Custom Brokers Association (BCBA) & Founder, Interport Clearing Services

The Inaugural Session of CTL-BHP 2026 on the second day opened against

a backdrop of exceptional global volatility, setting a tone of both confidence and urgency. In his welcome address, the speaker underscored the strategic weight of India's logistics and freight forwarding sector, which contributes nearly 15% to national GDP. This scale, he noted, brings with it a responsibility to adapt rapidly as the industry undergoes a generational shift, marked by a growing influx of start-ups introducing digital-first approaches into a traditionally conservative ecosystem. This domestic dynamism, however, is unfolding amid persistent external shocks. Ongoing disruptions stemming from the Ukraine conflict, the Red Sea crisis and escalating tensions in West Asia have repeatedly fractured global supply chains, reinforcing the urgency of India's Atmanirbhar Bharat agenda. Within this context, the proposed Bharat Container Shipping Line was positioned as a strategic necessity rather than an option — a sovereign response to an increasingly uncertain maritime environment where dependence on external capacity has become a structural risk. The keynote address offered a forward-looking assessment of India's container shipping and logistics potential. Strengthening trade linkages between India and Europe were highlighted as a



Mr Dushyant Mulani addressing the Inaugural Session on Day 2 as (seated from left) Mr Vishal P. Mehta, Mr Atit Mahajan, Mr Lenny Abrao, Mr Godwin Xerri, Mr Parthasarathy Gopalan and Mr Sanjeev Harale look on

major opportunity, particularly when paired with the accelerated development of logistics parks and digital platforms capable of supporting India's expanding manufacturing base. Port digitalisation, the speaker argued, has moved beyond efficiency gains to become a competitive imperative. The ability to attract global shipping lines now hinges on the sophistication of digital port infrastructure, and India's leading port operators are beginning to respond with greater urgency. At the same time, the address was candid about existing constraints. Inconsistent rail and road connectivity to ports continues to undermine reliability, while policy unpredictability adds commercial risk to long-term logistics planning. Fiscal reforms to encourage coastal cargo movement were identified as a high-impact intervention that remains pending. Setting the broader strategic context, the session Chairman observed that in an era of sustained geopolitical disruption, seamless logistics functions as a form of economic defence. Strong partnerships, supported by data integration and digital connectivity, have emerged as critical differentiators for firms navigating uncertainty.

The panel discussion reflected the intensity of change reshaping global shipping. Participants described the shipping agency business as operating in a state of continuous transformation, requiring near-real-time adaptability. Agents, it was argued, must evolve from reactive intermediaries into proactive advisors, anticipating disruptions and offering strategic guidance. The increasing marginalisation of European ports added a geopolitical layer to these operational challenges. Discussion on the ongoing crisis was particularly sobering. With no clear resolution in sight, panelists warned of cascading humanitarian and economic consequences, including risks to food security. The container shipping sector's response was characterised as a structural reset rather than a temporary adjustment, with rerouting, surcharges, equipment imbalances and cost escalation now embedded realities. The session concluded with cautious optimism, anchored in the belief that technology — from AI-driven analytics to the forthcoming Customs Integration System announced in the Union Budget — will be central to building efficiency, resilience and trust across India's logistics ecosystem.

Fifth Technical Session - Theme: Maximizing Efficiency and Performance in Supply Chains and Warehousing with Key Enablers



The Fifth Technical Session had as participants (from left) Mr Pankaj B. Mali, Mr Jeekshith Shetty, Mr Shankar Shinde, Mr Vivek Kele, Ms Devi James Melchior, Mr Tushar Mathur and Mr Pratap Singh Chauhan

The Fifth Technical Session had as participants:

- ★ Mr Shankar Shinde, Immediate Past Chairman, FFFAI & Chairman, IFCBA & MD, Global Express Multilogistics Pvt. Ltd – Session Chairman
- ★ Mr Vivek Kele, Director, Teamglobal Logistics Pvt. Ltd - Moderator
- ★ Ms Devi James Melchior, Senior Vice President – Logistics, K-Indev Logistics
- ★ Mr Tushar Mathur, Senior Vice President, DBS Bank India Ltd
- ★ Mr Jeekshith Shetty, Managing Director, Bhavani Group
- ★ Mr Pankaj B. Mali, Lead – Imports/Exports & Bangladesh Operations, Mondelez Foods India Pvt. Ltd.
- ★ Mr Pratap Singh Chauhan, Head Exim, Jindal Stainless Limited

The Fifth Technical Session focused on the structural and technological enablers shaping the future of India's supply chains and warehousing ecosystem. Opening the session, the Chairman outlined the government's strategic objective of reducing logistics costs, which are still above global benchmarks, towards a more efficient and integrated system. This transition from fragmentation to integration is being driven by a suite of policy and infrastructure initiatives, including PM Gati Shakti, Bharatmala and Sagarmala, the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP), and the development of Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs). Free Trade Agreements were identified as important demand-side catalysts, while the India-Middle East-Europe (IMEI) Corridor was highlighted as a potentially transformative development capable of reshaping regional supply chain networks. The moderator emphasised a critical distinction between hard infrastructure — ports, highways and warehouses — and soft

infrastructure, encompassing digital platforms, process standardisation and human capabilities. For perishable and temperature-sensitive supply chains, particularly food logistics, this integration is essential. The ability of logistics service providers to deliver true end-to-end solutions will increasingly depend on how effectively these two dimensions are aligned.

Warehousing inefficiencies emerged as a key concern, with estimates suggesting significant losses due to operational gaps, alongside an additional 2% loss attributable to human error. Speakers highlighted how technology can meaningfully reduce dwell time through real-time data sharing with transporters, automated inventory management and bundled service pricing models. One national logistics operator handling approximately 60,000 TEUs per month illustrated how real-time information flows are already generating measurable efficiency gains at scale. The financing dimension was addressed by a banking sector representative, who outlined five pillars critical to effective supply chain finance: platform robustness, turnaround time, cost efficiency, availability of funds and transparency. Short-term hedging instruments to manage cost volatility were identified as underutilised tools, particularly relevant for logistics-intensive industries. The session concluded with insights from the manufacturing sector. A leading stainless steel producer noted that nearly 90% of its port-origin cargo moves by rail, underscoring the importance of port mechanisation, conveyor systems and uniform policy implementation across states. The overarching message was clear: logistics efficiency and sustainability are not trade-offs but mutually reinforcing outcomes in the evolution of India's supply chain ecosystem.

Sixth Technical Session - Theme: The Role of Air Cargo in Strengthening Global Supply Chains and E-commerce Growth



Panelists in the Sixth Technical Session were (from left) Dr Arloph Johnvieira, Mr Rajen Bhatia, Mr Harish Shetty, Mr Shantanu Bhadkamkar, Mr Venkatesh Iyer and Mr Keshav Tanna

The Sixth Technical Session had as panellists:

- ★ Mr Shantanu Bhadkamkar, MD, ATC Global Logistics Pvt. Ltd & President, AMTOI – Session Chairman and Moderator
- ★ Mr Harish Shetty, CEO, Mumbai Cargo Service Centre Airport Pvt. Ltd
- ★ Mr Keshav Tanna, Director, Links Forwarders Pvt. Ltd & Secretary General, FIATA
- ★ Mr Venkatesh Iyer, Vice President – Commercial, Sharaf Cargo Pvt. Ltd
- ★ Mr Rajen Bhatia, Chairman – Western Region, The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI) & MD, Tulsidas Khimji Pvt. Ltd
- ★ Dr Arloph Johnvieira, Vice President – Supply Chain, Bajaj Healthcare Limited

The Sixth and final Technical Session of CTL BHP 2026 focused on air cargo, a segment that has moved decisively from a niche role to a core pillar of global supply chain resilience. Opening the session, the Chairman noted that air cargo is no longer defined solely by speed, but by its growing importance within supply chain architecture — an area where India's role is expanding rapidly. The post pandemic surge in air cargo demand formed a central theme of discussion. Much like digital payments, air cargo was rapidly normalised during Covid 19 as supply chains sought resilience and flexibility. Even as sea freight conditions stabilised, this shift proved structural rather than temporary, embedding air cargo more deeply into global logistics strategies. However, demand growth has collided with a significant capacity constraint: delivery timelines for

new commercial aircraft now extend to nearly 14 years, creating a medium term ceiling on capacity expansion. While airlines — including Indian carriers — have placed substantial aircraft orders, their impact will materialise only gradually.

Geopolitical instability, particularly the ongoing West Asia crisis, was identified as a critical risk factor affecting air cargo routing, pricing and reliability. Disruptions to West Asian airspace could materially impact India linked cargo flows, heightening operational uncertainty. In response, Oman's emergence as an alternative routing hub, with expanded capacity, was cited as a pragmatic adaptation. Closer to home, the development of the Navi Mumbai International Airport cargo terminal was highlighted as a strategic opportunity to expand capacity and mitigate concentration risk associated with Mumbai's existing single terminal model. India's aviation liberalisation in the 1990s was acknowledged as the foundation of today's air cargo ecosystem. What began as a consumer driven aviation market has evolved into a sophisticated logistics platform. The growing role of e-commerce players, now offering excess cargo capacity to third parties, is reshaping competitive dynamics across the sector. For exporters of time critical and sensitive goods — especially pharmaceuticals — air cargo is no longer optional but operationally indispensable. Speakers emphasised that success in this segment depends on end to end temperature control, regulatory compliance, supply chain visibility and a solution oriented partnership mindset. The session concluded with a clear message: air cargo's strategic moment has arrived, and with targeted infrastructure investment and ecosystem collaboration, India is well positioned to play a leading role in its next phase of growth.

Seminar on Young Minds, Big Impact: Transforming the World of Cargo and Logistics for the Next Generation

The participants were:

- ★ Ms Chaitaly Mehta, Director, EKF Global Logistics Pvt. Ltd – Moderator
- ★ Mr Prashant Popat, Director, Velji Dosabhai & Sons Pvt. Ltd
- ★ Mr Keyur Gandhi, Director, Express Global Logistics Pvt. Ltd
- ★ Mr Mihir Bhadkamkar, Director, ATC Global Logistics Pvt. Ltd & Vice Chairman-Mumbai Chapter, Air Cargo Forum India

This seminar explored how the next generation is reshaping family-owned logistics businesses, balancing legacy with change. The discussion opened with a fundamental question: while families often want their children to join the business, are they truly ready to hand over responsibility and space? Panelists from multi-generation logistics families shared varied entry experiences. Some described structured inductions across departments, discovering passion through hands-on exposure, while others stressed the importance of working outside the family business first. A recurring theme was passion—often inherited but not guaranteed. Logistics, while vital to nation-building, is not traditionally seen as glamorous, making it less attractive to younger talent. The panel agreed that storytelling, social media and reframing logistics as impactful and tech-driven could help bridge this gap. Technology emerged as a defining force. While all panelists embraced digital transformation, they emphasised retaining old-school values: in-person meetings, on-ground learning and daily team interactions. Digital tools, data and AI were seen as enablers—not replacements—for human judgment. Several leaders shared how data-driven



Participants in the seminar were (from left) Mr Mihir Bhadkamkar, Mr Keyur Gandhi, Ms Chaitaly Mehta and Mr Prashant Popat

decision-making initially faced resistance from long-serving employees, but patient training and involvement eventually built trust and adoption. The future, they agreed, lies in "assisted intelligence," where technology enhances customer service by predicting issues while preserving human empathy.

The conversation also highlighted the importance of peer networks. As leaders—especially in family businesses—often feel isolated, trusted industry friendships provide a safe space to exchange experiences, learn from mistakes, and support one another during challenges. When discussing leadership evolution, panelists spoke candidly about difficult

decisions—breaking traditional practices, redefining roles and transitioning from individual-centric to team-based models. They stressed that change is less about replacing people and more about teaching, patience and mutual respect across generations. Looking ahead, the panel agreed that India's logistics sector excels in resilience and execution, often outperforming global counterparts despite infrastructure and bureaucratic constraints. On talent, some felt tech-first mindsets

are essential, while others argued logistics understanding must come first. Ultimately, they agreed that technology can be taught—but passion, patience and respect for the business are essential. The session concluded with a shared message: the future of logistics depends on bridging generational gaps, valuing the industry's role, embracing technology thoughtfully, and fostering trust—within families, teams and the wider ecosystem.

Seminar on Strategies and Compliances for Way forward in International Trade

It had the following participants:

★ Mr Mihir Ajit Shah, Advisor, Consultant & Trainer in International Business – Moderator

★ Mr Rishi Kant Tiwari, Director (Regional Head), Federation of Indian Export Organisations (Western Region)

★ Mr Hari Vinod, Assistant General Manager, ECGC Ltd

The seminar focused on the evolving compliance landscape in international trade and the strategies exporters and importers must adopt amid global disruptions, digital transformation and increasing regulatory scrutiny. While logistics challenges often dominate discussions, the panel emphasised that compliance and procedural accuracy are now equally critical to successful cross-border trade. Global geopolitical disruptions—beginning with the Russia-Ukraine conflict and extending to instability in the Middle East—have proven far more prolonged and complex than initially expected. These events have disrupted supply chains, impacted access to energy and raw materials and exposed vulnerabilities in global trade dependencies, particularly in LNG, petrochemicals, ceramics, cement and agriculture-related industries. Compliance, therefore, is no longer optional but a core operational pillar. Domestically, India's push toward digitisation and ease of doing business has transformed trade compliance processes across Customs, DGFT, GST and RBI platforms. While automation has improved transparency and efficiency, it has also removed the flexibility that once existed in manual systems. Deadlines are now system-driven and unforgiving. A major challenge highlighted was the lack of seamless integration across government platforms, leading to data mismatches, reconciliation errors, delayed payments and blocked export documentation. The need for a unified,

single-window compliance platform emerged as a critical requirement for the future.

Policy reforms, particularly India's rapid expansion of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), were discussed as long-term growth enablers. However, panelists cautioned that FTAs alone cannot drive export growth unless supported by exporter competitiveness, adequate banking liquidity, insurance coverage and simplified compliance. With India targeting USD 2 trillion in exports, exporters must spend less time resolving procedural issues and more time building markets. A significant portion of the discussion focused on export credit insurance and the role of ECGC. Credit insurance was positioned as a vital risk mitigation



The seminar was headlined by (from left) Mr Mihir Ajit Shah, Mr Rishi Kant Tiwari and Mr Hari Vinod

tool, protecting exporters from buyer default, country risk, foreign exchange shortages and geopolitical disruptions. Despite being among the most economical globally, export credit insurance remains underutilised in India due to low awareness and risk complacency. Real-world examples highlighted ECGC's role in ethically and practically supporting exporters during crises such as Covid 19 and geopolitical payment failures. From a strategy perspective, exporters were advised to prioritise compliance awareness, documentation

accuracy, pre export inspections, formal email communication (over informal channels) and early risk identification. Red flags such as unrealistic buyer behaviour, mismatched buyer profiles, unsecured communication channels and unusual market demand were emphasised. The seminar concluded that compliance must be viewed as a strategic business tool, not a procedural burden. A balanced approach—combining digital systems, human judgment, insurance protection and market intelligence—will be essential for exporters and importers to navigate the increasingly complex global trade environment.

Masterclass on Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Advantage for Indian Business in Export & Import

Global trade is undergoing rapid transformation, shaped by new alliances, digital integration and evolving policies. In this context, understanding Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) has become vital for businesses. Addressing this need, **Mr Mihir Ajit Shah, Advisor, Consultant & Trainer in International Business, conducted a Masterclass on "Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Advantage for Indian Business in Export & Import"** at CTL-BHP 2026. The session was notable for its practical orientation, translating complex trade concepts into actionable strategies. Mr Shah began by explaining FTAs as structured arrangements between countries designed to reduce or eliminate Customs duties and non-tariff barriers. He highlighted their broader scope, covering services, investments, intellectual property and regulatory cooperation. Participants were introduced to different types of agreements—PTAs, FTAs, CECA and CEPA—helping them distinguish their scope and relevance. A major focus was India's expanding FTA network. Agreements with ASEAN, Japan, Korea, UAE, Australia, and emerging partnerships with the UK and EU were discussed in detail. These agreements are reshaping trade flows and opening opportunities for Indian exporters in sectors such as chemicals, engineering goods, textiles, pharmaceuticals and consumer products. Practical examples resonated strongly with the audience. Mr Shah demonstrated how exporters benefit from reduced or zero Customs duties under FTAs—for



Mr Mihir Ajit Shah

instance, sulphuric acid to Indonesia, padlocks to the UAE and beauty products to Australia. Importers too can optimise costs, as shown through reduced duties on imports from Singapore and South Korea.

The session also emphasised the strategic importance of Rules of Origin, which determine eligibility for preferential tariffs. Compliance with criteria like value addition and tariff classification changes is essential, and many businesses miss out on benefits due to procedural gaps. This clarity was highly valued by participants. Recent high-impact agreements such as the India-Australia ECTA and India-UK CETA were explored, with insights into tariff elimination

schedules, services trade, investment facilitation and simplified compliance processes. These forward-looking perspectives encouraged businesses to align strategies with upcoming opportunities. Beyond theory, the Masterclass guided attendees on identifying applicable FTAs, evaluating product eligibility, understanding tariff commitments and ensuring compliance through documentation and certification. The structured approach connected policy frameworks with practical business strategies, making FTAs accessible and actionable. In today's competitive trade environment, FTAs are strategic necessities. Businesses that leverage them effectively can unlock cost savings, enhance competitiveness and expand globally. The Masterclass bridged policy and practice, equipping participants with clarity to navigate the evolving trade landscape.