

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF MARITIME EXCELLENCE

CHAIRPERSON, NATIONAL SHIPPING BOARD (NSB)

Distinguished guests, faculty members from the **Indian Maritime University School of Nautical Sciences (IMU SNS) & SIMTI**, and most importantly, the bright minds of our MTIs.

It is an honour to stand before you today at the **SIMTI Auditorium**. Looking at this room, I don't just see students; I see the architects of the future global supply chain. You are here to discuss **Innovation, Technology, and Geopolitics**—the three pillars that will define your careers and the survival of the maritime industry. These very forces are now rewriting the DNA of our industry. As you engage in these discussions, I want you to look beyond the horizon. The challenges we see today are not barriers; they are the foundation of a **"New Normal"** where Indian maritime prowess is destined to lead.

The Government of India (GOI) has moved maritime affairs from the periphery to the centre of our national economic strategy. Under the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision**, we are not just looking at the next year, but the next quarter-century. Through the **Maritime Development Fund (MDF)** and the **Ship Building Financial Assistance Policy (SBFAS)**, the government is providing the financial oxygen required to transform India into a global shipbuilding hub. We are transitioning from being buyers of technology to builders of assets. The push for **"Build in India"** ensures that the vessels of the future—powered by the fuels you are discussing today—will be born in Indian yards.

India provides nearly **10% of the world's seafarers**, and our goal is to increase this share significantly. The global industry looks to India not just for numbers, but for **high-quality, tech-savvy officers** who can handle AI-driven systems and complex future fuels. You are our greatest export. The GOI is committed to ensuring that your training at MTIs is world-class, aligning with international standards of digitalization and green shipping.

We are stripping away the bureaucracy that once stifled this sector. From digitized licensing to simplified ship registration, we are making it easier for capital to flow into shipping. For you, the seafarer, this means better welfare measures, streamlined documentation and a focus on your mental and physical well-being while at sea. The government's focus is to ensure

that a career at sea is as rewarding and seamless as any shore-based profession.

We are currently witnessing the **"Great Transition."** The era of **"business as usual"** is over. The drive toward decarbonization is not just a regulatory hurdle; it is a massive career opportunity. From Green Ammonia to Hydrogen fuel cells, the industry needs pioneers who understand the chemistry of new fuels as much as the mechanics of an engine. Do not fear the **"autonomous ship."** Instead, master the tools. AI and digitalization are here to augment your capability, making shipping safer and more efficient. Your generation will be the first to truly bridge the gap between traditional seamanship and high-tech data analytics.

I understand that the current geopolitical shifts—the risks, the route diversions, and the regional instabilities—might seem daunting. We are operating in a world of shifting alliances and regional instabilities. However, I want to offer you a different perspective: **Resilience is our greatest cargo and volatility is an opportunity.**

- **Resilience as a Skill:** Do not let these shifts deter you. Instead, view them as the **"New Normal."**
- **Innovation in Adversity:** It is exactly during these shifts that AI, Digitalization, and Future Fuels become critical. Technology allows us to navigate around risks; innovation allows us to stay ahead of them.

Please always remember:

"Geopolitical risk is no longer an outlier; it is becoming the New Normal."

The maritime industry has always been the first to feel the tremors of global shifts, but it is also the most resilient. The challenges we face today—from trade route diversions to energy security—should not deter you. Instead, let them motivate you to build a more robust, adaptable industry. You are training to be leaders in a world that requires "Active Resilience," where navigating a crisis is as fundamental as navigating a storm.

The maritime sector is expanding far beyond the deck and the engine room. Your career path is now a multi-dimensional map:

1. **Technical Leadership:** Specialized roles in managing green technology and cyber-secure vessels.

2. **Strategic Management:** Analysing geopolitical risks to ensure global trade continuity.
3. **Sustainability Experts:** Leading the charge in the blue economy.

The Challenge?

It is the Constant evolution.

The learning does not stop when you leave IMU SNS or SIMTI or any other MTI. The challenge is to remain a student of the industry throughout your professional life.

Be bold. Embrace the "New Normal"

The maritime industry is the lifeblood of the global economy. While the seas may be choppy and the political landscape uncertain, remember that **"calm seas never made a skilled sailor"**. Embrace the "New Normal," master the new technologies, and lead us into this new era of shipping.

Do not forget **"there is always a silver lining behind the dark clouds."**

Students, you are entering the industry at its most exciting inflection point. With the full weight of the **Government of India** behind you, through initiatives like **MAKV 2047**, you are backed by a vision that values your talent and your contribution to the nation.

Thank you, and I look forward to the insights your discussions will yield today. Use these academic discussions to challenge the status quo. Be the generation that turns **"Geopolitical Risk"** into **"Maritime Resilience."**

In the end, I must say,

"The world is waiting for Indian leadership on the high seas."

Jai Hind.

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