

COMARSEM-2026: Charting the Course for India's Maritime Future



After a small gap, compelled by circumstances well beyond its control, indeed a global phenomenon, the Kochi Branch has re-entered the track of conducting international seminars with renewed vigour by successfully hosting **COMARSEM-2026**, a two-day International Seminar held on 29th and 30th January 2026. The venue was Vivanta by Taj - Kochi, overlooking the idyllic backwaters of Kochi.

The list of invitees in attendance, numbering more than 300 and filling the well-appointed conference hall to the brim, resembled a virtual who-is-who of luminaries from the Indian maritime skyscape. The event was inaugurated by **Shri Sarbananda Sonowal**, Hon'ble Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways in virtual mode and was followed by a live video address by **Shri R Lakshmanan, IAS**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. **Shri Madhu S. Nair**, then Chairman & Managing Director of Cochin Shipyard Limited, was the Chief Guest. Other dignitaries who graced the event included **Shri Shyam Jagannathan, IAS, Directorate General of Shipping, DG Shipping**, **Shri Ajithkumar Sukumaran, Chief Surveyor-cum-Addl. DG (Engineering), DG Shipping**, **Shri B Kasiviswanathan (IRSME)**, Chairman, Cochin Port Authority, **Shri P K Mishra**, Managing Director, Indian Register of Shipping, **Shri Senthil Kumar**, Principal Officer, MMD Kochi, **Shri Kaushik Seal**, President, The Institute of Marine Engineers (India) and **Shri Rajeev Nayyar**, Past President, The Institute of Marine Engineers (India).

The two days were packed with a programme that featured in-depth discussions on current issues facing the Indian shipping industry, led by stalwarts whose decisions have a profound impact on the industry's performance. There were four panels comprising senior stakeholders, deliberating on the themes: *Impact of New Policy Initiatives, Path Towards Net Zero – Opportunities and Challenges, Shaping Future Shipping – Leveraging Indian Human Capital and Marine Infrastructure – The Catalyst for Nation Building*. A major segment of the seminar was the presentation of technical papers. Sixteen papers were presented by leaders from industry, academic experts, research organisations and the student community. In both segments, the lively exchanges between the eloquent experts on the dais and the keen participants in the hall were curtailed only by the sheer paucity of time.

The seminar was privileged to receive close involvement from the Directorate General of Shipping, which collaborated in the conduct of the event. The Director General of Shipping delivered a special address on "Blue Shipping-....." to the gathering and the Chief Surveyor made a presentation on "Green Shipping Transition and Development on MEPC Deliberations," adding significant value to the proceedings.

Another unique episode of the seminar was the felicitation of **Shri Madhu S. Nair**, who was officially stepping down from his position as C&MD of Cochin Shipyard Limited on the second day of the seminar. A

Ponnada and a plaque of felicitation were presented by the organisers, the plaque eulogising his contributions to the nation's shipping industry by elevating the organisation he led to the forefront of its class in India and transforming its performance from a prolonged period of modest outcomes to a scintillating phase under his stewardship. The Institute further honoured him with an Honorary Fellowship, the certificate being presented by the President of the Institute, made possible through the prompt and timely action of the Head Office.

The programme on the first day commenced with the Inaugural Function, with the inaugural address by Shri Sonowal, in virtual mode, followed by the key-note address by Mr. Lakshmanan again in virtual mode because of the imminent Parliament Sessions which prevented ministers and other senior officials from leaving the capital. These were followed by panel discussions and paper presentations on technical subjects very relevant to the Indian Maritime Sector. The day culminated in a one-hour boat ride through the picturesque backwaters of Kochi, thoroughly enjoyed by the participants. The boats, kindly offered by Kochi Water Metro Limited, the

water transport wing of Kochi Metro Rail Limited, were electrically propelled vessels constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited. These boats have revolutionised water transport services in Kochi, bringing unprecedented levels of comfort, safety, convenience and economy to thousands commuting daily between their homes and workplaces. The boat ride was followed by the dinner.

The seminar also featured a number of stalls, utilised by participating companies to showcase their activities and attract the keen attention of delegates.

The successful conduct of the event was made possible by the tremendous support extended by leading members of the shipping industry, academia and training institutes, the Maritime Ministry and Administration and various classification societies led by The Cochin Shipyard Ltd. The seamless execution of COMARSEM-2026 was preceded by the sincere and dedicated efforts of the organising committee, active involvement of Institute members beyond their call off duty, and the relentless contribution of the Branch office staff in ensuring timely completion of all preparatory work in an exemplary manner.

Glimpses of the Event



Lamp lighting ceremony by the dignitaries



Invocation



Shri Sajan P. John, Chairman, IME(I), Kochi Branch welcoming the guests



Shri R Lakshmanan, IAS, Joint Secretary, MoSPW, delivering key-note address



Shri Krishnan Kutty, briefing about the event



Shri Madhu S Nair delivering Chief Guest's Address



Shri Shyam Jagannathan, DGS, presenting his paper on Blue Economy



Shri Ajith Sukumaran, Chief Surveyor-cum-Addl. DG, presenting the Paper



Shri B Kasiviswanathan, Chairman, Cochin Port Authority, talking about the industry



Mr. Kaushik Seal, President, IME(I), talking about the event and its significance



Shri P K Mishra, MD, IRS giving the speech



Mr. Kaushik Seal presenting IME(I) Fellowship Certificate to Shri Madhu S. Nair



DGS presenting the eulogy to Shri Madhu S. Nair



Shri Madhu S Nair presenting memento to Shri Ajith Sukumaran



Shri Madhu S Nair presenting memento to Shri Kaushik Seal



Shri Krishnan Kutty presenting memento to Shri Madhu S. Nair



Shri Madhu S Nair presenting memento to Shri P K Mishra



Mr. Krishnan reading the eulogy to Shri Madhu S. Nair



Mr. Sanjeev presenting a memento to Mr. Antony Prince



Souvenir Release



Panel-1 Chair Shri Ajith Sukumaran initiating the discussion



Panel-1 Shri Rajeev Nayyar speaking in the panel



Panel-1: Mr. Mun Dae-Yeon speaking



Mr. Prince Antony presenting memento to Mr. Rajeev Nayyar



Mr. Antony presenting memento to Mr. Mun Dae Yeon



Panel 1: Speakers



Panel 2: Presenters with Moderator Mr. V.V. Paul



Mr. Joshin John of Xavier Institute, Kochi presenting his paper



Mr. T.K. Sahu, presenting his paper



Mr. Mangesh V. Karekar of Magnolid Tech presenting his paper



Mr. Johnny Kackur presenting his paper



Panelists with Dr. Malini V Shankar



Paper Lot-2 Presenters



Panel-3 with Dr. Malini V Shankar



Mr. Sunil Kumar Iyyappan in panel discussion



Mr. Prince presenting a memento to Mr. Rajesh Gopalakrishnan of CSL



Mr. Sonny Joseph presenting a memento to Mr. V.V. Paul



Mr. Sivaram N. Swamy presenting a memento to Mr. Antony Prince



Mr. Prince sharing his thoughts about Shri Madhu S. Nair



Mr. Aditya Patel in panel discussion



Panel-4 with Mr. Sivaram N. Swamy, leading organisers



GC 2025 - 27 with Shri Shyam Jagannathan, DGS



Some Panelists with Shri Shyam Jagannathan, DGS



Group of Sponsors and Participants



Dr. K. A. Simon reviewing the event



Mr. N Rajan, Convener, delivering Vote of Thanks at Valedictory Function



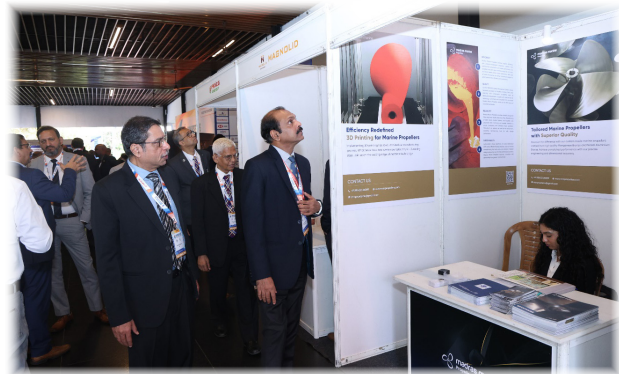
Paper by Mr. Jorma Koponen on DP Positioning



Panelists with Dr. Simon and Mr. Mathew Koshy



Shri Ajith Sukumaran opening the Stalls



Stall Visit



The Shipping and Marine Fraternity in strong presence at COMARSEM