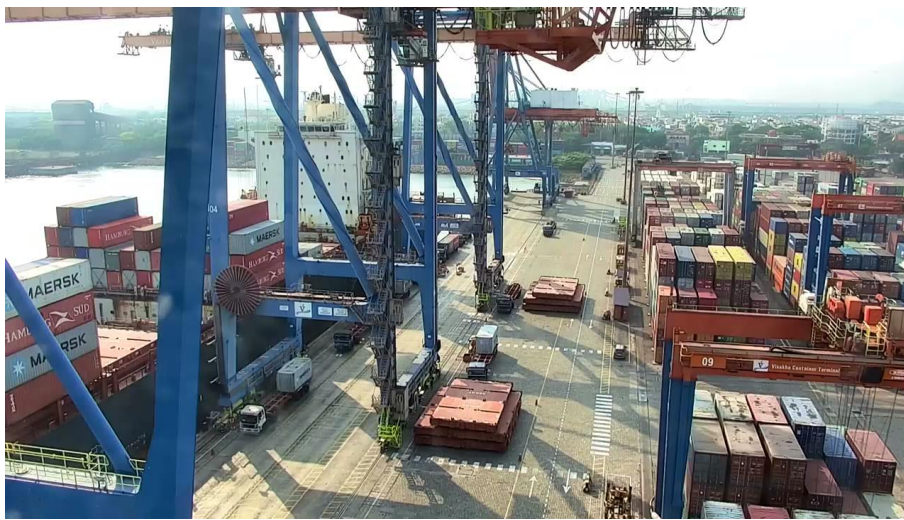




## VCT Sets Ship Productivity Record For Maersk Vessel

Visakha Container Terminal (VCT) has set a new ship productivity record of 110 moves per hour while handling the CHX service vessel Mexico, completing a total of 2113 moves in just 19.4 hours on 8 April 2021 with an average gross crane productivity of 28.8 moves per hour. The latest achievement of 110 moves per hour exceeded the terminal's earlier productivity record, achieved in December 2019, of 108 moves per hour. These achievements underscore the commitment of VCT to provide consistent and reliable best-in-class services to the shipping lines.



With the enhanced operational efficiency at the terminal, VCT is facilitating faster ship movements, thereby reducing the cost of logistics and improving the effectiveness of the supply chain for the EXIM trade. VCT's strategic location, hinterland connectivity and on-dock rail facilities are attractive to shipping lines globally.

Extending the rebates for vessel-related charges, VPT's accommodation of container vessels of 390 metre LOA and developing an empty container yard are some of the recent initiatives taken to facilitate the trade. With an additional 395-metre-long quay getting ready for operation during the third quarter of the year, terminal capacity will increase to 1.3 million TEUs annually by the end of 2021.

## Raipur – Vizag Economic Corridor

Yet another great news for the growth of industrial sector in the Visakhapatnam hinterland. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Raipur-Visakhapatnam Economic Corridor has been completed. Mr. Nitin Gadkari – Union Minister for road transport & highway said "the DPR in majority of the project portion was completed and acquisition of land, forest and environment clearances are in different stages of approval". He said the entire stretch is a Greenfield alignment, passing through 124 kilometers in Chhattisgarh, 240 kilometers in Odisha, and 100 kilometers in Andhra Pradesh.

The 464-kilometre-long stretch will start from Abhanpur, near Raipur and will go till Sabbavaram on the outskirts of Visakhapatnam. The proposed economic corridor passes through Aluru village in Vizianagaram district to Sabbavaram village in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The estimated time frame for completion of this project is end of FY 2023-24.

The Raipur-Visakhapatnam Highway is an economic corridor approved under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I. The estimated cost of the project is about INR 2542.67 Crores. The alignments of economic corridors “Raipur-Vishakhapatnam” are completely under access control and intends to facilitate seamless trade by reducing the distance between connecting cities, saving cost, time, and fuel & carbon emissions.



The project will further have benefits like high-speed connectivity and access, aiding economic growth, decongestion of existing National & State highways and support to growing industry. Visakha Container Terminal (VCT) has been the most economical and ideal gateway for the rice exporters of Chhattisgarh. With the new highways coming up, it will definitely help the rice exporters from Chhattisgarh to have seamless transportation between the rice growing areas and VCT. Not only rice shipments, other top commodities like Ferro Alloys exports, ores, machinery imports etc., would also witness a huge jump in volumes making VCT their preferred gateway.

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## India Bangladesh Trade Relations Getting Stronger

Trade relations between India and Bangladesh are very strong since many years. Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia. Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade. In a recent development India and Bangladesh decided to move forward on a feasibility study for Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to further strengthen economic ties between the two countries. The issue was discussed during a meeting between the commerce secretaries of both the countries.



India's exports to Bangladesh in FY 2018-19 stood at \$9.21 billion and imports during the same period were at \$1.04 billion. CEPA is a kind of free trade agreement, under which two trading partners either eliminate or reduce customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between the two nations. Extensive discussions were held on issues like streamlining certificate of origin procedures, regional connectivity initiatives, anti-dumping duty on jute products, removal of port restrictions etc.

Major exports from India to Bangladesh are ferro alloys, cotton, aluminum, food products, chemicals, steel etc., whereas major imports from Bangladesh are garments, leather goods, jute products etc. Strengthening of trade relation will definitely boost up the EXIM traffic movement and will enable both the countries to have long term relations. Visakha Container Terminal has been the gateway on the east coast for EXIM movement between the countries because of its proximity advantage and seamless vessels movements. The bilateral trade agreements and envisaged developments will showcase new horizons for the development of trade and thus incremental EXIM traffic is poised to be moved via VCT.

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## Cotton Exports – On The Verge To Witness High Volumes

The Cotton Exports from India are in the verge of witnessing new horizons where the losses can be recovered while adding profits further with the increasing demand of the commodity globally. The estimated growth is likely to rise by 30%-50% with the global demand increase from both China and Bangladesh. Additionally, the ban by US on Xinjiang cotton has opened doors for Indian cotton to reach at a higher rate. The increased demand and supply of Cotton has brought smiles on the Cotton Spinning Mills & Shippers as the losses are getting recovered at a greater pace.

The capacity utilization of the cotton mills which was about at 40%-50% have reached as high as 80% with this new move by US region. Yet another boost to the cotton exporters is that Pakistan has also opened doors for cotton imports from India which has been suspended since 2019.

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According to Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), the estimates are that the production of the commodity may reach up to 75 lakh bales of 170 kg each this fiscal year while the previous year it was about 50 lakh bales. The triggering factor of the increased demand of Cotton from India is because of the slash down in fibre prices. Indian Cotton has been the cheapest amongst the other producers and thus the countries like Vietnam, China, and Bangladesh along with Pakistan are reaching out to Indian shippers to buy cotton where Bangladesh is the largest buyer amongst all. Turkey and Indonesia are two other countries who are also in the race to import cotton from India.



Vijayawada & Guntur regions which has high yields of cotton crops have been utilizing Visakha Container Terminal's services for the commodity exports where Khammam in Telangana is also more likely to join the bandwagon very soon. With the envisaged growth of Cotton, VCT is poised to witness a good increase of the commodity shipments in 40 feet containers that are traditionally surplus here.

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## Sugar Export On Rise

Sugar exports are increasing on a rapid pace in India. Indian sugar companies managed to bag over 83% of the export target against 6 million tonnes for the year 2020-21. The increase in export volumes is mainly due to firm global prices and export subsidy. One main reason of increased Indian sugar export is due to lower production in top sugar producing countries i.e., Brazil and Thailand. Thailand had bad crop while Brazil is set to produce less sugar after the drought last year.



Indian government had announced a scheme in January 2021 to incentivise exports and thus reduce the surplus sugar in the domestic market. The scheme was meant to help the sugarcane growing farmers as it assumed that the sugar mills will pay their bills on time when the sugar prices in the domestic market improve on clearing the excess stocks.

The top 6 export destinations for India sugar till April 2021 are Indonesia (38%), Afghanistan (12%), Sri Lanka (10%), UAE (9%), Somalia (8%) and Bangladesh (6%). Apart from exports, domestic demand is also high. Despite increasing COVID-19 cases and partial lockdown in some parts of the country, the demand seems shooting up. Since the year 2015 the Sugar exports from India has shot up by 49% taking the third place after Russia and South Africa

The export demand in March '21 was almost 20% more than last year March. Visakhapatnam has also been pivotal in the exports of Sugar which is exported to countries like Jakarta, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka etc. The Sugar factories within the hinterland of Visakhapatnam increased production and demand have been the prime players of the commodity exports increase. With the increase in overall export volumes, VCT is all ready to support the trade with hassle free operations working 24x7 in this pandemic season too.

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## Fire Safety Week @ VCT

Fire Service Week is observed nation-wide from 14th to 20th April every year in remembrance of the lives lost in the devastating fire that erupted and the explosions that followed on 14th April 1944. SS Fort Stikine was carrying a mixed cargo of cotton bales, gold, and ammunition which included around 1,400 tons of explosives while docked at Victoria Dock in the Bombay Port. The ship caught fire and was destroyed in two giant blasts, scattering debris, sinking surrounding ships. The blast and fire were so intense that it killed around 800 people and injured 3000. Around 66 brave firemen from Bombay Fire Brigade were killed on call of duty during the massive fire at Bombay Port. The National Safety Council (NSC) is promoting the Fire Service Week campaign since 1999 with a view to propagate fire safety awareness amongst employees and the public.



Visakha Container Terminal organized the fire awareness and demonstration session in the terminal from 14th to 20th April. Awareness sessions & Training were conducted regarding basic Firefighting techniques and Fire hydrant operations with demonstration. The fire damage depends on the combustible substance, its physical arrangement, geometry of the building, likelihood of ignition, etc. The risk can be controlled by fire protection measures in place, which relate to fire prevention and fire control. Statistics reveal that nearly 8 to 10 per cent of all fatalities in industries are due to fire and explosion in factories and industries.

Basic knowledge was shared with employees and contract employees regarding usage of fire equipment, emergency exits at various locations, safe assembly points, distinguishing different siren patterns and whom to contact while emergency. The aim was to create an awareness on fire safety and focus its attention on fire prevention at the workplace with an objective to enable employees to control fire effectively for ensuring a safe working environment.