BACKGROUNDERS
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Government of India

Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme: Building India's Maritime Future

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India's growing trade and manufacturing ambitions have increased the need for a strong domestic container manufacturing base. The proposed Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS), backed by a ₹10,000 crore outlay, seeks to promote manufacturing, investment and technology development across the container ecosystem. With broader reforms in shipping, ports and logistics, the initiative is expected to strengthen India's maritime capabilities, generate employment and support India's long-term trade competitiveness.

The Need for Domestic Container Manufacturing

Global trade today is increasingly driven by containerised logistics. According to the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development** (UNCTAD), around **80% of global merchandise trade by volume is transported by sea**. Maritime transport forms the backbone of international commerce. Meanwhile, containerised cargo accounts for nearly two-thirds of the value of international trade. These trends highlight the strategic importance of efficient container logistics in supporting global supply chains.

In recent years, geopolitical tensions, supply-chain disruptions and changing shipping routes have exposed vulnerabilities in the global movement of goods. UNCTAD has observed that these disruptions have contributed to freight-rate volatility and increased pressure on maritime transport networks. As a result, many countries are placing greater emphasis on enhancing domestic manufacturing capabilities for critical logistics assets, including shipping containers.

India's growing role in global manufacturing and international trade has significantly increased the demand for containerized cargo movement. However, despite expanding export-import (EXIM) trade and rapid logistics development, India has largely depended on imported empty containers. **India imports nearly 2 million empty containers every year to meet domestic demand and for repositioning purposes.** This has made container availability vulnerable to global market fluctuations, freight volatility and supply-chain disruptions.

Recognizing these emerging challenges, the **Government announced the Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS).** It aims to establish a globally competitive container manufacturing ecosystem in India by promoting domestic manufacturing and encouraging investment across the value chain. The initiative also seeks to reduce import dependence and strengthen supply-chain resilience. Further, it complements the Government's initiatives under Make in India, **Maritime Amrit Kaal** Vision 2047 and multimodal logistics development, contributing to India's long-term maritime and trade ambitions.

What are Containers?
Shipping containers are standardized steel freight containers used to transport cargo across ships, railways and road vehicles without unloading and repacking the goods during transit. Built to internationally recognised ISO (International Organization for Standardization) specifications, they enable seamless intermodal transport and efficient global trade. The most common sizes are 20-foot and 40-foot containers, measured in Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs), the standard unit used to measure container capacity.

What is Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS)?

CMAS was announced in the **Union Budget 2026–27**. It is a targeted initiative to establish a competitive domestic container manufacturing industry through financial and institutional support.

With an outlay of ₹10,000 crore over five years, the proposed scheme supports establishment of new manufacturing facilities and expansion of existing units. It also aims to enhance manufacturing capacity to meet India's growing demand for shipping containers.

The initiative targets an annual domestic manufacturing capacity of around 10 times the existing container production capacity upto 7.5 lakh Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs). It is expected to **generate a market opportunity of nearly ₹80000 lakh crore** while positioning India as a reliable producer of internationally competitive shipping containers.

To strengthen the container manufacturing value chain, the scheme provides:

- **Capital assistance** for establishing **new Greenfield manufacturing facilities**.
- Support for **expansion of existing Brownfield manufacturing units**.
- **Operational support to improve the competitiveness** of domestic container manufacturing.
- Support for testing infrastructure, skilling initiatives and capacity building.

Building an Integrated Maritime Ecosystem

CMAS is one element of a broader strategy to build an integrated, domestically anchored container ecosystem. In February 2026, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways signed an MoU to establish the Bharat Container Shipping Line (BCSL). This brings together the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), the Container Corporation of India (CONCOR), the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority, V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VOCPA) and the Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SFMCL). The initiative envisages **investments of around ₹99,149 crore in fleet development of 51 container vessels of various sizes and domestic container procurement**.

This coordinated approach complements the Government's wider logistics initiatives. These include:

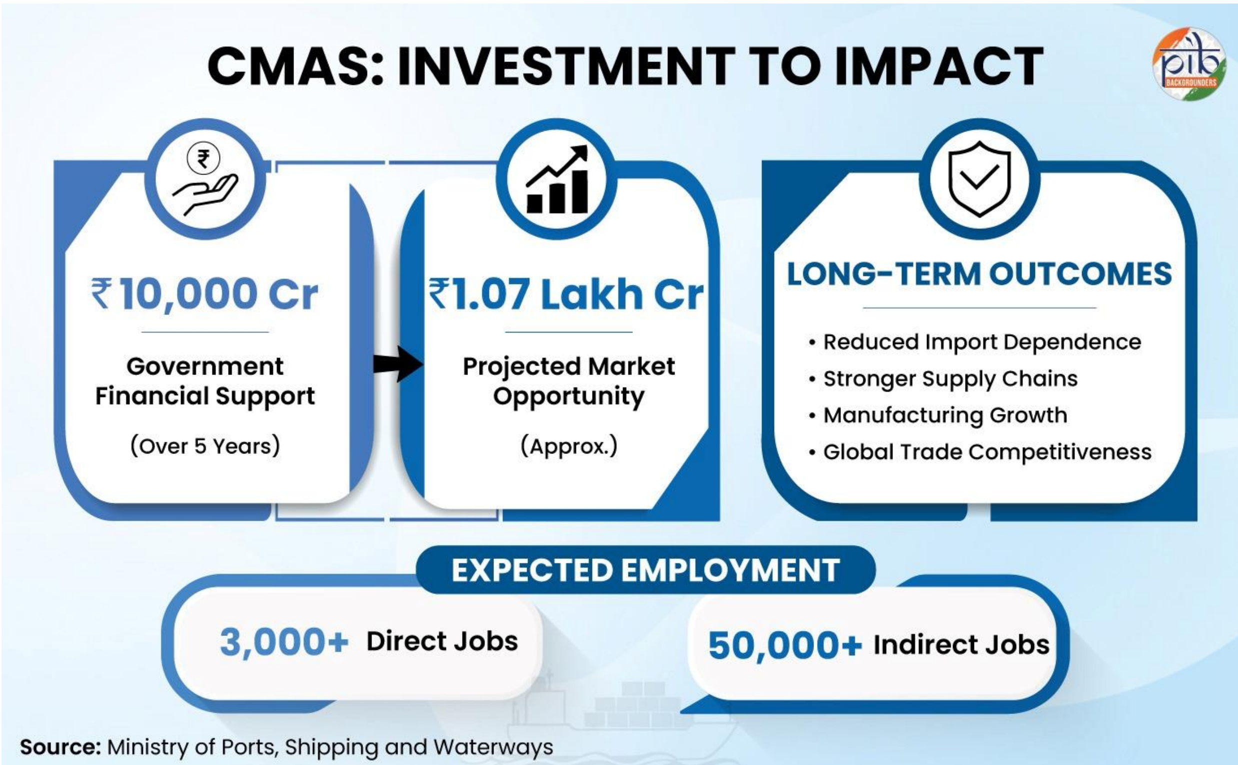
- **PM Gati Shakti**, enhancing connectivity between ports, railways, highways and industrial centres;
- **The National Logistics Policy**, supporting operational efficiency; and
- **The Sagarmala Programme**, promoting port-led development.

These initiatives support a resilient and integrated logistics network for India's growing trade volumes.

Employment and Manufacturing Opportunities

Beyond improving logistics resilience, CMAS is expected to generate substantial employment and stimulate industrial development.

It has the potential to generate around **3,000 direct jobs** and more than **50,000 indirect jobs** across container manufacturing and allied industries.



The initiative is also expected to catalyse growth across several ancillary industries, including:

- Corner castings
- Wooden frames
- Corten steel

Recent Progress and Industry Response

In July 2026, India achieved a significant milestone in maritime manufacturing with the **rollout of its first India-manufactured export-import (EXIM) shipping container** for global shipping company, A.P. Moller–Maersk. The container was unveiled at the Maersk–CONCOR Inland Container Depot in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh.

The container has been manufactured in accordance with **internationally recognised ISO standards and the International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC)**. This makes it suitable for deployment across global shipping networks. **The rollout demonstrates India's capability to manufacture globally compliant shipping containers.**

Another notable milestone was Maersk's order for **1,000 additional Made-in-India shipping containers** with DCM Shriram Group. The order represents an early **commercial endorsement** of India's emerging manufacturing capability. It also signals **growing confidence among global shipping companies in India's ability** to produce high-quality shipping containers.

These developments indicate that the Government's policy interventions are beginning to translate into commercial outcomes. **They also reinforce India's ambition to emerge as an important manufacturing hub within the global maritime value chain.**

Part of Wider Maritime Transformation

CMAS is part of a broader set of reforms strengthening India’s maritime sector. Alongside promoting domestic container production, the Government has introduced a series of legislative, institutional and infrastructure initiatives. Together, these measures seek to modernise India's maritime ecosystem while improving ease of doing business.

These include the enactment of the **Merchant Shipping Act, 2025**, **Coastal Shipping Act, 2025** and **Indian Ports Act, 2025**. These legislations provide an updated legal framework for shipping, coastal trade and port governance. Complementing these reforms are digital initiatives such as the **One Nation One Port Process (ONOP)**, the **Maritime Single Window** and **e-Samudra**. These initiatives simplify regulatory procedures, reduce documentation and improve operational efficiency across ports and shipping services.

The Government has also announced a **₹70,000 crore Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Package**. The package aims to boost domestic shipbuilding capabilities and encourage greater investments in the maritime manufacturing sector. Along with the proposed Bharat Container Shipping Line (BCSL), these measures seek to build an integrated maritime ecosystem that spans shipbuilding, container manufacturing, shipping services, ports and multimodal logistics.

Major infrastructure projects, including **Vadhavan Port**, the **International Container Transshipment Port at Galathea Bay**, the **Tuna Tekra Container Terminal** and the **Outer Harbour Container Terminal at V.O. Chidambaranar Port**, are progressing rapidly. These projects are aimed at expanding India's maritime infrastructure and enhance cargo-handling capacity.

Three Indian ports are now ranked among the world's top 30 in the Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) 2025, reflecting continued improvements in port efficiency and reinforcing India's position in global maritime trade.

Way Forward

CMAS marks a significant step towards building a globally competitive maritime manufacturing ecosystem. By promoting container production and reducing dependence on imports, the scheme is expected to strengthen supply-chain resilience, generate employment and enhance India's competitiveness in global trade. **Complemented by broader maritime reforms, CMAS has the potential to position India as a leading maritime manufacturing and logistics hub.**

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