

# **IMU's 2<sup>nd</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AZIMUTH 2026 inaugurated by Mrs. JP Irene Cynthia MD Kamarajar Port Ltd.**

Chennai | 13 February 2026: The Indian Maritime University (IMU), a Central University under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India, organised its 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference AZIMUTH 2026 – dedicated to Digital Transformation and Innovation in Maritime Management, at the IMU Chennai Campus on 12–13 February 2026.

The programme featured an invocation and ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by a welcome address by R Adm. Dr. Rangachari PJ (IN) (Retd.), Director IMU Chennai Campus, Dr. Malini V. Shankar, IAS (Retd.), Vice Chancellor IMU, addressed the gathering and released the conference proceedings. The inaugural session was further enriched by addresses from the Chief Guest, Ms. J. P. Irene Cynthia, IAS, MD, KPL and Guest of Honour Shri Madhu S. Nair, ex-CMD, Cochin Shipyard,. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. M. Sekar, Head (SMM). The inauguration marked the formal commencement of two days of academic and industry engagement.

AZIMUTH 2026 a two-day Conference brings together a diverse and influential gathering of global maritime leaders, policymakers, academicians, researchers, technologists, and industry professionals to examine how emerging technologies are reshaping the future of maritime operations, logistics, sustainability, safety, and governance.

The conference served as a strategic platform to accelerate dialogue on the regulatory frameworks, global standards, and governance systems required to support maritime digital transition while ensuring long-term resilience, security, and efficiency across maritime ecosystems.

## **Key Focus Areas and Thematic Tracks**

Aligned with India's maritime vision and the evolving needs of global shipping and port ecosystems, AZIMUTH 2026 featured discussions, research presentations, and expert sessions across six major thematic tracks:

1. Smart Ports, Logistics & Supply Chain Technologies
2. Maritime Data Science, AI & Predictive Analytics
3. Cybersecurity, Digital Governance & Regulatory Innovation
4. Autonomous Shipping, Smart Navigation & Fleet Operations
5. Sustainability, Circular Economy & Green Maritime Solutions
6. Integrated Transport Ecosystems

## **Highlighting Transformative Innovations**

With the maritime sector undergoing rapid technological evolution, AZIMUTH 2026 spotlighted transformative innovations including:

- Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) and autonomous underwater vehicles
- Artificial Intelligence and Big Data analytics for maritime decision-making
- Blockchain-enabled transparency in maritime logistics and supply chains
- Cybersecurity frameworks for smart ports and digital shipping
- Digital technologies supporting predictive asset management and operational efficiency

## **Leadership Perspective**

Speaking during the conference Dr. Malini V. Shankar, Vice Chancellor, Indian Maritime University, emphasized the importance of aligning innovation with execution and national priorities.

*“All the initiatives that have been taken are in alignment with what was planned and documented. So, it’s a commitment of India to not just put it on paper but actually to implement it,” she stated.*

## **Outcomes and Next Steps**

AZIMUTH 2026 concluded with a strong consensus on the need for collaborative action between academia, industry, and government to ensure that maritime innovation remains both scalable and secure. Selected research papers presented during the conference will be considered for publication through official conference channels, strengthening knowledge exchange and global academic contribution.

With this successful edition, IMU reinforced its role as a national and international hub for maritime research, policy dialogue, and technology-driven transformation—supporting India’s broader ambition to lead in smart, sustainable, and secure maritime ecosystems.



