

"13th Edition of Annual Shipping & Logistics Conclave 2024"
Friday, 15th March 2024, Williamson Magor Hall, The Bengal Chamber premises

The 13th Edition of Annual Shipping and Logistics Conclave 2024 by The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I) was organized on Friday, 15th March 2024 at the Bengal Chamber premises.

The conclave was inaugurated in the esteemed presence of Mr Gautam Ray, President, BCC&I, Mr Debashis Dutta, Chairperson, Shipping and Logistics Committee, BCC&I, Shri Rathendra Raman (IRTS), Chairman, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (SMPK), Smt. Vandana Yadav (IAS), Principal Secretary, Department of Industry, Commerce and Enterprises, Government of West Bengal, and Capt S B Mazumder, Mentor, Shipping and Logistics Committee, BCC&I along with other eminent industry Stakeholder.

During the inaugural session **Mr Gautam Ray**, President, BCC&I, deliberated that the Shipping and Logistics industry has always been the pulse of the global economy and the year 2023 has been a landmark year for the industry as it achieved a total of 1.25 billion Metric tons of cargo". He also touched upon the significance of 'Sagarmala' project and attaining sustainability through green logistics.

Mr Debashis Dutta, Chairperson, Shipping and Logistics Committee, BCC&I, touched upon the importance of Ports, Waterways, Coastline, and Customs in the Supply Chain and Logistics. He said "Logistics sector is the mother of all other industries", he further recommended that it is high time that supply and logistics sector be given status of an Industry.

Guest of Honour, Shri Rathendra Raman (IRTS), Chairman, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (SMPK) shared with the audience that West Bengal has seen a state GDP compounded growth rate of 12.62 % since 2016. West Bengal is strategically located and the supply and logistics industry must leverage this advantage to transform further growth in the state. 13.6% of the total steel exported from India is shipped out of SMPK. The port has a planned expenditure budget of Rs 5000 crores to further develop the port in next 5 years and aims to achieve handling capacity of 120 million metric tons by the year 2030. He emphasized on the need of regulatory permissions for the port to operate in during nights as well. He exhorted the businesses based in the state to utilize the services of SMPK instead of sending their cargo to ports outside Bengal.

Chief Guest, Smt. Vandana Yadav (IAS), Principal Secretary, Department of Industry, Commerce and Enterprises, Government of West Bengal, while emphasizing the importance of conclave said that such conclaves give an opportunity to the government to communicate with the stakeholders to inform them of the various government activities and also obtain feedback from the environment. She informed the audience that the West Bengal is one of the first states in the country to frame its logistics policy and achieving Industry status for the Shipping and Logistics industry is one of the aspirations of the state logistics policy. She also briefed the gathering about the ongoing Inland waterways project, West Bengal development project and the corridor development project in the state.

Capt. S. B. Mazumder, Mentor, Shipping and Logistics Committee, BCC&I summed up the inaugural session of the conclave, emphasizing the importance of cultivating the right attitude and maintaining a positive outlook.

The conclave highlighted the topics:

- Focus Bengal – A Road Map for Development
- Golden Period of Logistics in East and North East
- Emerging Challenges in Global Shipping and Logistics Sector

Technical Session I: Focus Bengal – A Road Map for Development

The session was moderated by **Mr. Ashutosh Jaiswal**, Co- Chairperson, Shipping and Logistics Committee, BCC&I and President - International Business Division & Logistics, Century Plyboards (India) Limited. The eminent panelists for this session were **Shri. A. K. Mehera**, Dy. Chairman, HDC, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port; **Mr Shoumik Bose**, Director, Ripley & Co. Stevedoring & Handling Private Limited; **Mr Avishkar Srivastava**, Chief Innovation Officer, The PDP Group; **Mr Aviral Jain**, Director, Pristine Hindustan Infraprojects Pvt Ltd.

The session highlighted that the roadmap for development in Bengal focuses on optimizing logistics infrastructure to streamline cargo movement and reduce costs, with Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port Kolkata (SMPK) serving as a key hub boasting efficient railway sidings and incentives for freight forwarders. Efforts are underway to construct weigh bridges, truck terminals, and ensure

skilled manpower for specialized equipment handling at ports. Additionally, the strategic significance of the Inland Container Depots (ICDs) at Siliguri and Durgapur is highlighted, emphasizing their potential to facilitate cargo consolidation and serve as logistics hubs connecting various corridors. Initiatives to promote packaging industries in Siliguri and leverage improved road connectivity aim to bolster its role in facilitating cargo movement to SMPK, while Durgapur's round-the-clock customs clearance facilities and recent introduction of air cargo services underscore its potential as a thriving logistics hub with a custom-notified rail terminal, contributing to Bengal's economic growth trajectory.

Technical Session II: Golden Period of Logistics in East and North East

The session was moderated by **Mr Dinesh Shastri**, Managing Director, TM International Logistics Limited (TMILL). The eminent panelists for this session were **Mr. Adhip Nath Palchoudhuri**, Director Service Business, Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd.; **Mr Shantanu Verma**, Chief - Shipping Services, Tata Steel Limited; **Ms Nivedita Ghosh**, Senior Manager Outbound and Coastal shipping at Tata Steel Group; and **Mr. Sudip Kumar Dey**, Honorary Secretary, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India

The session brought forward that the current phase marks a promising era for logistics in East and North East, with a focus on maritime and inland water transportation. Coastal shipping and inland waterways are emphasized for their cost-effectiveness and environmental benefits, with efforts to streamline regulatory processes and augment port infrastructure. The significance of the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route for coastal shipping and inland water transport is highlighted for improving regional connectivity and reducing transit costs. Digitization initiatives at ports and custom offices, alongside the implementation of projects like PM Gatishakti and ULIP, aim to enhance efficiency and ease of doing business in the logistics sector. Overall, the industry is poised for significant growth and transformation driven by digitalization, offering opportunities for increased agility, flexibility, and sustainability.

Technical Session III: Emerging Challenges in Global Shipping and Logistics Sector

The session was moderated by **Col Yogpal Singh**, Head of Corporate Affairs, D P World. The eminent panelists were- **Capt. S. B. Mazumder**, Executive Director, Seahorse Ship Agencies Pvt. Ltd; **Mr Subhojit Ray**, Partner, Victor Moses & Co.

The discussion was focused on the emerging challenges stemming from ongoing tensions in the Red Sea region, particularly due to Houthi rebel attacks on cargo ships and tankers on the global shipping and logistics sector. These incidents have disrupted the traditional route through the Suez Canal, compelling vessels to seek longer alternative routes, such as circumnavigating Africa's Cape of Good Hope. This diversion has led to increased transit times, fuel consumption, and freight costs, affecting global supply chains. India, a key player in international trade, is also experiencing the impact, with rising transportation costs affecting exporters and importers. However, efforts are underway to mitigate these challenges, including exploring alternative routes like the proposed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. Additionally, legal implications related to piracy and maritime incidents, including insurance coverage and liabilities, are crucial aspects in managing risks in the shipping industry.

Mr. S Hajara, Advisor, Shipping and Logistics Committee, BCC&I, provided excellent closing remarks for all the sessions and offered insightful reflections on the ultimate result of the conclave- "POSITIVITY".

Overall the Conclave was a successful one and had the presence of Senior Dignitaries from the Government and industry stakeholders. The conclave was well attended by more than 200 participants. The entire programme was very well covered in leading media houses.