

Annual Shipping Conclave
on
Future Strategies of the Shipping Industry – Vision 2030
Friday 31st January 2020 at ITC Sonar, Kolkata

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BENGAL CHAMBER

Emergency Response

- a) Appointment of a Single Nodal Authority having full Powers to deal with all kinds of Shipping emergency. Every State should have such an Authority which should have full Powers to dispense / over rule with the normal procedures of Immigration, Customs, Police, Government's bureaucratic interferences, etc. Such an Authority could constitute Senior and experienced officials from the State Maritime Boards, Port Trusts, Coast Guards, Navy, Environment Forest and Climate Change, Fire Brigade, State Police and/or other agencies, as deemed fit. The main reason for such an important recommendation is that 'handling of such maritime emergencies in India have' often been subjected to very serious procedural delays in undertaking rescue operations resulting in loss of lives and property.
- b) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be prepared by the above Authority for handling any kind of Maritime emergencies including free import of Sophisticated Equipments (*not available in India*) to tackle such emergencies.
- c) A different set of SOP for Sri Lanka and the Indo – Bangladesh Trade Protocol route may be required as these are high density traffic areas.
- d) The above Nodal Authority should have full power to order the use of all Port Assets of major ports, if required in any such emergency situations.
- e) Foreign Emergency Rescue Operation Companies having experience in handling Maritime Emergency situations should be allowed to work freely in case there is a dearth of such Domestic Companies and all facilities for their prompt participation should be provided by the Nodal Authority.
- f) During Emergency Operation, Ports to Dedicate a Berth for support services with free backup areas.

Ship Recycling and Ship Building

Alang region on the Western Coast of India is a heavily congested Hub for Ship Scrapping/Recycling. It is the suggestion of this Chamber, that similar hubs may be created on the Eastern Coast of India at a convenient location with

modern technology since major Steel industries are situated in West Bengal, Orissa and Jharkhand. Integration of these Steel industries with Ship Scrapping / Recycling and a good future for Ship Building, the Steel Industry facing the wrath of China would considerably benefit which in turn would surely contribute to the increase of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Ports

- a) Establishment of Training Institutes for Skilled Personnel in the Maritime Industries should be established in the vicinity of a few important and key ports on Western and Eastern Coasts which would provide easy access for on the job training.
- b) Co-ordination is severely missing amongst important organizations like Port Developers, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Public Works Department (PWD) / Municipal Corporations, etc of State and Central Governments and Railways for better infrastructure required for Ingress and Egress of Logistics facilities to / fro Ports and hinterland.
- c) On the National Waterway -I, there is an overlapping of roles between Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT) and Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). While KoPT is in charge of the Chainage from Sandheads to Bally Bridge, thereafter IWAI is the Nodal Authority upto Allahabad. IWAI have built a Cargo Handling Terminal in Kolkata Docks River Front. There is a "double Cargo Wharfage" payable once to KoPT and then to IWAI at the rate of Rs. 29.65 and Rs. 21/- per million tonne respectively. The charges of these two separate establishments highly increases the cost of transportation of goods by Inland Waterways. These charges need to be considerably reduced to promote use of Inland Waterways when such cargoes are handled at IWAI River Jetties for barges only.
- d) Lighterage operations to be encouraged by Ports with open policies and not Tender based. This would result in market competition and Ship Owners / Trade would benefit by reduced tariffs.
- e) City based ports in India are all facing hurdles in free flow of Container Traffic. With modern Information Technology, Port Managements need to find proper container traffic movement solutions by involving local Police Commissionerates.

Information Technology

- a) While some CCTVs have been installed in ports, it needs to be made compulsory in every port to be able to cover their entire working areas.

- b) Age limitations need to be strictly imposed on all Port equipments in major, minor and private ports.

Petroleum / Energy

- a) Currently vessel Bunkering is mainly done by Barges of the Oil Companies inside the restricted Dock Area and small quantities by trucks from jetties. With increasing Lighterage operations of large Tankers and Bulk Carriers in midstream and at port outer anchorages, it has become imperative that Oil Companies should on priority procure suitable Barges capable of supplying Bunkers to vessels at outer anchorages.
- b) Renewable Energy to be gradually made compulsory in Major Ports including the private ports.

Ship Technical Management

Special Economic Zones (SEZ) like Hubs to be created along the coasts to promote ship and/or technical management companies to set up shops in India. These would be a boom for skilled as well as unskilled Manpower employment in India. Tax Breaks and/or Real Estates projects could be centered around such Hubs.

Finance

Regretfully Banks and Financial Institutions are still not in favour of Financing Barge construction nor Coastal Shipping. This is seriously affecting the increase in the tonnage in these two areas. Government needs to take remedial actions as both these sectors have tremendous future growth potential.
