

Shri Gadkari Reviews Performance of Cochin Port & Cochin Shipyard Ltd.

The Minister for Road, Transport, Highways & Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari, during his visit to Kerala on 26 September, 2016, reviewed the performance and future expansion plans of Cochin Port and Cochin Shipyard Ltd. The review of functioning of Cochin Port focussed on improving the financial health of Cochin Port by enhancing cargo and reducing costs. Projects for expansion of handling crude oil and refined petroleum products were reviewed. Timely completion of these projects would lead to substantial increase in cargo handling at the Port. The Minister encouraged Cochin Port to identify new streams of cargo such as:

- i) attracting cargo from hinterland in Tamil Nadu which has a shorter distance to Cochin Port than to other ports;
- ii) Considering the movement of approximately 35 MT of food grain into Kerala from other States, potential movement of such food grains through coastal shipping and creating dedicated food grain handling facility including modern storage systems in the form of silos and
- iii) developing coastal traffic comprising automobiles through Ro-RO vessels, cement and construction material.

The Minister also highlighted the importance of generating additional resources of revenue through:

- i) using dredged material to generate sand for construction purpose;
- ii) cryogenic warehouse facilities using low cost of coolant available from the LNG facility at the Port;
- iii) improving cruise tourism facility to increase number of cruise vessels handled from the existing level of 35-45 vessels per year and
- iv) use of passenger terminal and associated land for conference and other incidental purposes, when not used for passenger/cruise handling.

Plans of the Port to develop land of 181 acre to set up logistic park, warehousing zone, hospitality industry etc. were also discussed. Minister directed that a detailed master plan of the land should be prepared where world class facility should be developed.

Shri Gadkari reviewed the functioning and expansion plans of Cochin Shipyard Ltd. The dry dock project of Rs.1800 crore and international ship repair facility of Rs.950 crore are major infrastructure improvements to the shipyard which will increase the revenues of Cochin Shipyard while also creating employment opportunities for the youth of the region.

Potential for developing ship repair facilities along the coastline particularly in Goa, Kandla and A&N Islands, was stressed by Minister. He suggested that this could be done in partnership with

ship repair yards being run by the private sector, to develop capacities and creating a win-win situation.

The Minister suggested that dedicating more resources for developing new products such as dredgers, RoRO and Ropax vessels, high speed catamaran and L&G fuel barges etc, would create a strong growth path for CSL.

The RoRo barges being made by Cochin Shipyard would be very useful to implement the plans for several Ro-Ro ferry crossings on the Ganga and Brahmaputra. Such Ro-Ro crossings have the potential to substantially reduce road distances which exist at present owing to fewer bridge crossings across rivers.

The Minister directed that the skill development programme being run by CSL should be enhanced to create larger number of training slots for workers in ship building industry and also high skills such as ship designing.

The Minister ultimately stressed on timely completion of projects supporting innovative ideas, looking at new products and creating more employment opportunities for the people of the region.

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