

Report – Flag off Ceremony of Air Cargo Operations from BPIA Bhubaneswar

International trade or global trade enables countries to expand their markets and access goods and services that otherwise may not have been available domestically. As a result, the market is more competitive and diverse. International Trade ultimately results in more competitive pricing and brings an economically viable product home to the consumer. In this way, international trade stimulates economic growth and increased as well as more efficient use of the resources.

Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), Bhubaneswar is now ready with all necessary infrastructure and regulatory permissions to handle direct export/import of air cargo to/from international destinations. The Air Cargo Operations are now open to three major destinations, Dubai, Singapore and Bangkok.

In this regard, a flag off ceremony was held on Wednesday, 31 January 2024 at the AAICLAS International Air Cargo Facility which was facilitated by World Trade Center Bhubaneswar to inaugurate the commencement of air cargo to/from international destinations through BPIA Bhubaneswar. This initiative shall act as a boost to the export scenario of the state.

Shri. Pratap Keshari Deb, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, MSME, Industries & Energy Department, Government of Odisha graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. He flagged off the first consignment of 100kg Cashew nut Kernels and products from Jindal Steel to Dubai and Sweden. "Now the exporters and importers can run their business directly with the destination countries through BPIA and avoid delays due to various reasons. The direct service will also reduce handling fees as well as the hassle", he deliberated in his address. He further said that Odisha has huge scope for exports of metals and minerals, besides handicraft, handloom, agriculture, horticulture, marine and pharmaceutical products. "The international air cargo service has been reintroduced at a cost of Rs 2 crores with direct flight service to Singapore, Dubai and Bangkok", he added.

"Though Odisha had been primarily focusing on mineral and metal products, export of marine and agri-products, handicrafts, handlooms, chemical and allied sectors in addition to IT and ITES has shown immense growth potential in the last decade. Exports will be facilitated to Europe, Middle East and South East Asian countries in coming days. The state has vast opportunities as despite Covid-19 pandemic, 56 percent of transportation of goods from Odisha were made through air cargo service", **Shri. Saswat Mishra, IAS, Principal Secretary, MSME Department, Government of Odisha** deliberated in his welcome remarks.

Smt. Usha Padhee, IAS, Principal Secretary, Commerce & Transport Department, Government of Odisha in her address shared that "Indigo handles 210 tonnes of cargo everyday and it can provide support to transport of at least 30 percent goods from the state. The state has a huge potential we look forward to a flourishing cargo operations to/from the state which shall add to the overall economic growth of various sectors".

Shri. Madhab Mishra, IRS, Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Bhubaneswar and **Shri. Puspall Chakraborty, Senior Manager, Cargo Operations, IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd.), BPIA** also shared their insights during the session.

Senior Government officials, officials from IndiGo Airlines, AAICLAS, Airport Authority of India, BPIA Bhubaneswar and other stakeholders were present in the occasion along with exporters and importers from the state.

Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar moderated the session.

The flag off ceremony was held on Wednesday, 31 January, 2024 at the premises of AAICLAS International Air Cargo Terminal.

Caption for the Photographs:

01. In Photo: Shri. Pratap Keshari Deb, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, MSME, Industries & Energy Department, Government of Odisha flagging off the first consignment through Air Cargo Facility of BPIA Bhubaneswar in the august presence of Shri. Saswat Mishra, IAS, Principal Secretary, MSME Department, Govt. of Odisha, Smt. Usha Padhee, Principal Secretary, Commerce & Transport Department. Govt. of Odisha and other senior officials

04. In Photo: Senior Government Officials, officials from AAICLAS, Customs Commissionerate, IndiGo, WTC Bhubaneswar, Regional Plant Quarantine Office, Export Promotion Councils along with exporters/importers from the state post successful execution of the flag off ceremony