

# The Durgapur Depot

The first private inland container depot in the eastern region – Allied ICD Services – popularly known ICD Durgapur, has grown up to become the cornerstone of growth in the industrially active region of Durgapur. Having faced initial hurdles and teething troubles from the trade, the ICD today commands respectable container volumes and stands as the key link to the cargo coming from northern India. On the backdrop of this impressive growth, **Pramod K Srivastava**, Director, Allied ICD Services, discusses trends of this region and the need for an effective logistics policy in the state of West Bengal, in an interview with *Jagadeesh Napa*.



**Pramod K Srivastava**  
Director, Allied ICD Services

**Q** Being a pioneer in establishing a private ICD in eastern region, how do you see the growth of container cargo in this region? Do you observe any specific trends or patterns?

Growth in this region is now inevitable with the change in Government; opportunities are expected to be bigger now with the change that is likely to come in the overall industrial environment in Bengal. It is most important that the Government of West Bengal understands the importance of the growth of the logistics in the state for the rapid industrialisation of the state. Towards this end, developing ports, highways, railway networks, common user facilities, civic infrastructure have



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to be developed on priority basis. The government should come out with a user-friendly as well as an industry-friendly infrastructure & logistics policy for the investors to take a serious look at West Bengal. This has to be in line with other developed states and the central government.

We are the pioneers in development of inland container depot in Eastern India. Though we struggled initially, we have established awareness about the benefits of ICD Durgapur. All major shipping lines today use this ICD as their cargo acceptance point and for issuance of through B/L up to Durgapur

There are two major areas in West Bengal where ICDs are required; one is Durgapur wherein approximately

₹ 95,000-crore investments are lined up and another one is Siliguri where ICDs can give big boost to the development of exim trade and international logistics as it connects the entire Northeast India.

## Q | What advantages does Allied ICD Durgapur offer to its clients?

ICD Durgapur is ideally located at the doorstep of the biggest industrial hub in West Bengal. Major shipping lines have started using our services. Clients get benefitted in the seamless movement of containerised cargo up to / from ICD Durgapur whereby entire Customs clearance can be done at ICD Durgapur, thus saving the cost of CFS charges (Import). Liners have also started offering empty containers availability (export) or drop off facility (import) at the ICD that saves one-way transportation component in the entire logistics. This has resulted in happy customers for us who take advantage of the lower costs and quick turnarounds.

## Q | Tell us about your arrangement with CONCOR for transporting exim containers. How will the trade benefit through this?

ICD Durgapur is connected by road, and railway (short distance bridging). Presently the rail service is done from Durgapur to Kolkata Port through exclusive arrangement with CONCOR for export / import. This ensures smooth and riskless transportation of clients' cargo to and from Kolkata.

Container traffic from the Durgapur region is mostly heavy in nature (up to 30 MT gross weight). Unfortunately, there is no road transport facility / infrastructure at this moment which would allow road carriage of these 30-MT containers by trucks / trailers. Further, if the Government of West Bengal implements the weight restriction rule stringently, it will be impossible for transporters to carry 30-MT containers by road but ICD can carry

## Win-win partnership

The partnership between Allied ICD and CONCOR has proved to be a win-win situation for both the parties as well as for shippers and shipping lines. Concor's Durgapur ICD, a rail-based facility, handles only domestic traffic as it does not have Customs facilities for handling exim containers. Whereas, the Allied ICD, a road based depot just a few km away, has the Customs facilities.

The arrangement enables CONCOR to transport exim containers on behalf of Allied ICD by rail to and from Kolkata port in addition to handling its own domestic containers. As a result, Concor's throughput increases while Allied ICD's transportation cost drops. The road movement is now undertaken only to cover a few km between the two ICDs. This has led to reduced costs for the shippers and more volumes for the shipping lines.



these containers if they use railway instead of road transport. On the other hand, this is will benefit the port too wherein 90 containers by rail can be handled in one go and it will definitely bring in a lot of operational convenience to the Port.

We, therefore, urge all exporters and importers to use the rail facility instead of moving their cargo by road.

## Q | Can you throw some light on the throughput figures of your ICD for the last financial year?

### What are your targets for this fiscal?

The figures for ICD for the last FY 2010-2011 are as below:

#### Import

20-foot container - 1,571  
40-foot container - 336.

#### Export

20-foot container - 1,854  
40-foot container - 1,405.

Target for this fiscal year 2011-12 is to handle 12,000 TEU.

## Q | What are your future expansion plans? Can we expect more tie-ups / alliances like the one with CONCOR in future?

At this time there is no future expansion programme other than alliance with similar logistics providers like CONCOR etc. I am hopeful that the new Government of West Bengal would come out with a logistics policy for service sector infrastructure and arrange refund of VAT and interest subsidy. Also, we expect the government to create a maritime board, similar to Gujarat Maritime Board, for West Bengal.

## Q | Do you think ports today are better positioned to catalyse the growth of ICD/CFS?

Yes, ports the world over have played key role in development of ICD/CFS business. But it is really unfortunate that Kolkata Port does not have clearly defined policy framework for development off-dock system for overall outside port logistic development. The Chairman of Kolkata Port Trust should declare a comprehensive policy combining all facets of logistic infrastructure like CFS, ICD and railway traffic, common railway terminals, warehousing which will encourage the private investors to take a serious look at the opportunity. **IE**