

# East Coast Maritime Forum & Eastern Star Awards 2024

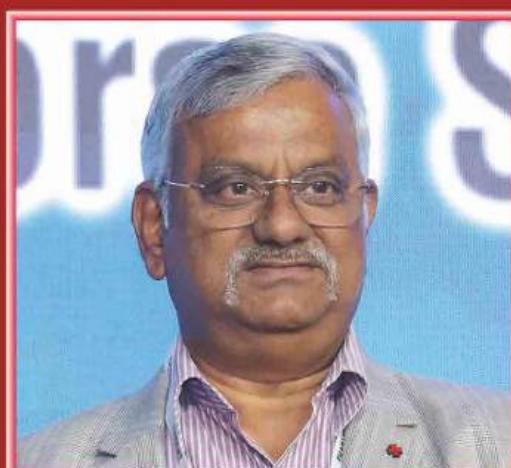
## sees a compelling deliberation with eminent participation and endorsement of all-round excellence



The Shippers & LSP Forum was graced by (from left) Mr G. Sambasiva Rao, Capt. Mohit Chaturvedi, Mr Gopal Krishna, Mr Pramod Kumar Srivastava, Mr Ashutosh Jaiswal, Mr Arup Bandhu Guha, Mr Sudip Dey and Mr Brij Mohan Lakhota



Mr Eshor Raj Poudel



Mr A. K. Mehera



Mr Ravi Shankar Rajhans



Mr Gopal Krishna, IAS

**T**HE maritime, cargo and logistics sector has been taking giant strides in the eastern region in recent years, with all-round infrastructure development including in ports and terminals; focus on connectivity, especially to regional neighbours; impetus on developing inland waterways to connect Bangladesh and the North-East; growth in feeding as well as direct sailings; improved Customs facilitation etc. These were the gist of the the opinions made and points raised at *Exim India Shipping Times' East Coast Maritime Forum (ECMF) - Shippers & LSP Forum and Eastern Star Awards 2024* at Nicco Parks & Resorts, Kolkata on Wednesday, January 10, 2024.

The expansive and attractive venue was witness to the assembly of the leading lights of the trade from the region (see box), and some even from outside the region, who graced the occasion as speakers, panelists and the large number of delegates. They facilitated and were part of an engaging, interactive deliberation on the multiple facets of the event theme, **Cargo & Logistics in the Eastern Region – A new era of transformation**.

While the welcome address was given by **Mr Gopal Krishna, IAS, Former Shipping Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, Government of India & Chairman, CSC (Conciliation and Settlement Committee)**, as also the Event

### KOLKATA :

Convener, the keynote address was delivered by **Mr Ashutosh Jaiswal, President (Int'l Business, Shipping & Logistics), Century Plyboards (I) Ltd & Director, Century Ports Ltd.**

The panel discussion was expertly moderated by **Mr Pramod Kumar Srivastava, Director & CEO, The PDP Group**, who also made the theme presentation.

Among the key participants also were:

★ **Mr Eshor Raj Poudel, Consul General of Nepal in Kolkata**

★ **Mr A. K. Mehera, Deputy Chairman, Haldia Dock Complex, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port**

★ **Mr Ravi Shankar Rajhans, Traffic Manager, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port**

During the interactive session, **Mr Ravi Shankar Rajhans** informed that a barge service between Kolkata and Haldia should be operational soon after some issues, especially regarding Customs, are sorted out.

### Wide-ranging discussion at the Shippers & LSP Forum

It was an absorbing session at the Forum, with insightful views and thought-provoking observations. The delegates also participated by raising pertinent queries. Some of the important points made are featured here.

# DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS & PANELISTS

- ❖ Gopal Krishna, IAS, Former Shipping Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, Government of India & Chairman, CSC (Conciliation and Settlement Committee) & Event Convener
- ❖ Ashutosh Jaiswal, President (Int'l Business, Shipping & Logistics), Century Plyboards (I) Ltd & Director, Century Ports Ltd
- ❖ Pramod Kumar Srivastava, Director & CEO, The PDP Group
- ❖ Capt. Mohit Chaturvedi, Sr. Vice President & National Head – Sales & Business Development Container Terminals, J M Baxi Group
- ❖ Arup Bandhu Guha, Vice President (East India), Samsara Group
- ❖ Sudip Dey, Director, Haridass Chunder (Clearing Agents) Pvt. Ltd & Honorary Secretary, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India
- ❖ G. Sambasiva Rao, MD, Sravan Shipping Services Pvt. Ltd
- ❖ Brij Mohan Lakhota, Managing Director, Pinnacle Logistics (India) Pvt. Ltd & Convenor – Eastern Region Chapter – AMTOI (Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India)



## Opinions & Views

★ Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (SPM Port) has made a comeback in the last 5-7 years and is set to see further growth, thanks to its initiatives and the support of the trade.

★ Growth of the port is linked to growth in IWT.

★ There is need to consider smaller vessels on National Waterways.

★ Traffic will further improve at SPM Port with new terminals set to become operational in the next 1-2 years and night navigation.

★ IWT if utilised properly will significantly reduce logistics cost; it requires certain benefits and sops.

★ Ministry has to give guarantee of minimum draft on National Waterways.

★ The eastern region has all 5 modes of transport – sea, air, rail, road, waterways; so huge opportunity, especially given the proximity to the North-East, neighbouring countries, countries in South-East Asia.

★ One cannot do everything sitting in Kolkata, so service providers have to go out into the region and develop facilities.

★ One has to think out of the box. Mindset has to change.

★ More B/L points are required.

★ Customs facilitation has improved due to digitalisation.

★ The trade has to collaborate, especially in this age of

digitalisation.

★ Lot of short sea, IWT opportunities in the east.

★ Intermodal shift in cargo movement is expensive and challenging; has to be sorted out.

★ Kolkata has always been a hub of this sector and is seeing enhanced activities of late.

★ Logistics efficiency is critical for India's economic sustainability.

★ Nepal and Bangladesh present immense opportunities for logistics players.

★ Two of the advantages of Vizag are 24/7 working and no monopoly.

★ Vizag handles a lot of Nepal boxes due to its ecosystem advantage.

★ Nepal and Bangladesh should complement India's ease of doing business initiatives and provide more facilitation in certain areas.

★ The eastern region will primarily be doing more of feeding.

★ We need realistic freight that covers the costs.

★ The Red Sea crisis will also impact the east coast in the form of increased transit time, high bunker and charter hire costs, resulting in enhanced freight.

★ Need to relax cabotage, open up coastal trade to foreign shipping lines.

### Comprehensive Awards

The captivating deliberation at the Forum was followed by the appealing **Eastern Star Awards 2024**, where excellence by companies and individuals across the entire spectrum of shipping, cargo and logistics was honoured in more than 35 categories. The across-the-board recognitions were much appreciated by the trade.

The **Awards Jury, headed by Mr Ashutosh Jaiswal,**

**President (Int'l Business, Shipping & Logistics), Century Plyboards (I) Ltd & Director, Century Ports Ltd**, was also felicitated on the occasion.

As the event concluded with networking cocktails and dinner, attendees expressed happiness at the quality of the deliberation, the deserving awards, and the opportunity to catch up with all in the trade gathered under one roof.



Some of the award winners

## A FEW COMMENDATIONS FROM THE TRADE

ECMF event was well organised.

**Capt. S. B. Mazumder,**  
Executive Director,  
Seahorse Ship Agencies Pvt. Ltd.

We thank you for organising the event with so much of detailed information & hard work put in by you & your team.

**Mr Arup Bandhu Guha, Vice President (East India),**  
Samsara Group

Thank you for a well organised event. We had an excellent time.

**Mr Raj Chopra, Director,**  
Freya Shipping Services Pvt. Ltd.

Thank you for the honour bestowed upon me. It means a lot for being recognised for the work on an independent level.

**Mr Sushil Dugar, Head SBU Logistics Services,**  
Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd.

It is really a lifetime honour and nothing can be more appreciated for this kind gesture.  
Kindly accept my deepest sense of thanks & gratitude.

**Mr Piyush Kanti Acharya, Managing Director,**  
North Sea Shipping & Logistics Pvt. Ltd.

It was indeed an honour and a pleasure working with you & your team all through. Entire event process was well organised and efficiently coordinated. Always there to support & cooperate with your team for any future events.

**Mr Vijay Kumar Agarwal, Director,**  
Sun Glow Freight & Cargo Pvt. Ltd.

We would like to thank you and your team for conducting the Eastern Star Awards 2024 programme at Nicco Park and Resorts on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

The programme was managed very professionally and it was very nice to meet the shipping dignitaries and bigwigs of various carriers and operators at one place.

We would like to thank each and everyone connected to this event.

**Mr Dhritiman Mookherjee, JMD, EMU Lines Pvt. Ltd.**

# PERTINENT VIEWS AND SIGNIFICANT OPINIONS FROM SOME OF THE LEADING LIGHTS

## **Gopal Krishna, IAS, Former Shipping Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, Government of India & Chairman, CSC (Conciliation and Settlement Committee) & Event Convener**

Mr Gopal Krishna highlighted that Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port has seen tremendous growth in the last 5-7 years after being written off previously, which is due to its leadership and policy changes. The next few years will see further growth and volumes could reach 75-80 mt, he said. Efforts are being made to revive the ports and logistics ecosystem in this region by the trade. He also made the point that the growth of the port is linked to inland waterways transport (IWT), which needs further push and expansion. It's time to start thinking of smaller vessels on IWT, he added. Haldia being a bound harbour is dependent on tides, which leads to congestion. One could consider altering this or creating new terminals on the river banks itself, he said. On coastal shipping, he called for complete relaxation in cabotage laws, opening up the segment to foreign lines. This will allow chartering of foreign flag ships.



## **Ashutosh Jaiswal, President (Int'l Business, Shipping & Logistics), Century Plyboards (I) Ltd. & Director, Century Ports Ltd.**

Mr Ashutosh Jaiswal called for collaboration among stakeholders to make Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port even better and highlighted some of the key projects coming up in the next 1-2 years that will boost turnaround time and reduce logistics cost – the Kidderpore Dock which is expected to be operational by December 2024, and Berths 7-8 which are being tendered; the highly mechanised berths are likely to be in place in 2 years. As per the port's Master Plan for the future, with night navigation and specialised mechanisation in place, turnaround time will improve and so will the traffic. If there is right infrastructure, cargo will come to the east, he emphasised. He also called for better utilisation of trucks from the current 12 hours a day to reduce logistics cost, given that over 70% of the traffic still moves by road. He touched upon the critical role technology is playing in reducing logistics cost and increasing efficiency, pointing to some shipping lines having introduced digital B/L. Besides, data regarding movement is being captured, which should be properly analysed for the betterment of the trade, he said. On IWT, he made the point that it will significantly reduce logistics cost if utilised properly. The Ministry has to give guarantee of minimum draught of 2.5 metres; then barges can be designed accordingly. Some benefits/sops should be given to encourage the trade to use IWT, he added.

## **Pramod Kumar Srivastava, Director & CEO, The PDP Group**

Mr Pramod Kumar Srivastava highlighted that the eastern region has all the 5 modes of transport – sea, air, road rail and IWT – and therefore a lot of opportunities, especially given its proximity to the North-East and neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. India's logistics market is surging, he emphasised. But everything can't be done sitting in Kolkata, he asserted, calling for a change in mindset in the trade to move out of Kolkata and set up facilities, carry out logistics inland. There are a lot of opportunities in the region, locations where ICDs are required. Customs has enhanced its processes by implementing digitisation, he added, and also called on shipping lines to provide more B/L points inland. Inland locations too need ease of doing business. He also suggested collaboration among logistics players as everybody can't do everything.



## **Capt. Mohit Chaturvedi, Sr. Vice President & National Head – Sales & Business Development Container Terminals, J M Baxi Group**

Capt. Mohit Chaturvedi highlighted J M Baxi Group's facilities at Haldia, Paradip and Vizag, handling varied cargo, terminals that are not competing with each other but providing opportunities and options to the trade in the region to grow their business and also not go to the west to avail of good infrastructure. They do a lot of coastal movement on the east coast, he said, majorly from Paradip to the west coast. But most coastal cargo is inbound to the east from the west. There are coastal shipping opportunities on the east coast, but the cost is on the higher side. There is not much conversion happening from road and rail, he said, adding that intermodal shift is expensive and needs to be addressed to attract cargo to coastal. He was also in favour of developing IWT as a cost-effective option. Besides, touched upon were opportunities in short sea shipping, especially connecting Bangladesh. The scope of short sea shipping encompasses Myanmar, Singapore, Port Klang, Malacca Strait, he pointed out. Then there is the potential in long haul, from Vizag, directly connecting Europe, Med, with feeder connections between Kolkata and Vizag.



## **Arup Bandhu Guha, Vice President (East India), Samsara Group**

Mr Arup Bandhu Guha also concurred that stakeholders should go out of Kolkata to avail of the opportunities present and be closer to the trade. We should all look beyond what we are doing, he said. Kolkata is a better feeder gateway, he observed; longer sailings could be possible from Haldia. On freight rates, he said they should be realistic, where the cost can be covered be it in any mode. The Red Sea crisis will no doubt impact the east coast too, with longer transit times, delays, increased cost of bunkering, gap in frequency of sailings etc. This will have a reasonable effect on pricing, which will go up, he pointed out.



## **Sudip Dey, Director, Haridass Chunder (Clearing Agents) Pvt. Ltd. & Honorary Secretary, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India**

Mr Sudip Dey too emphasised on the importance of mindset change among the players in the region. That will solve a lot of issues. A significant amount of Nepal cargo has been lost to Vizag because of the mindset of not moving out of Kolkata. Now getting it back is difficult, he pointed out. He also called on Nepal and Bangladesh to facilitate ease of doing business, similar to India, in order to boost logistics performance and business. We don't need fixed routes to Nepal; India-Bangla cargo can cross border directly, why go into ICDs; opening LC in Bangladesh to move cargo takes 10-15 days, why is this needed? There is a lot of talk about developing big infra, but these small things have to be looked into and can be sorted out fast. These are the low hanging fruit. Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan are all growing and therefore present a lot of opportunities, he highlighted.

## **G. Sambasiva Rao, MD, Sravan Shipping Services Pvt. Ltd.**

Mr G. Sambasiva Rao began by saying that ports have been spawning the development of cities and growth of industries. The advantage of Visakhapatnam Port is that people in the ecosystem want to work 24/7, its connectivity and other facilitations. Vizag thus gets cargo from a wide hinterland, he said. Also, there is no monopoly of service providers in Vizag. Anybody can start a business, and the aim is to benefit the ex-im trade. A lot of Nepal-related cargo is coming to Vizag because of the right port ecosystem and infrastructure, he pointed out. Ports thrive on efficiency and performance, which is true of Vizag. It is continuously upgrading its infrastructure and enhancing connectivity, which is attracting cargo. A port like Haldia can also plan accordingly, he added.



## **Brij Mohan Lakhotia, Managing Director, Pinnacle Logistics (India) Pvt. Ltd. & Convenor – Eastern Region Chapter – AMTOI Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India**

Mr Brij Mohan Lakhotia emphasised that Kolkata has always been a hub and will remain a hub given its connectivity to the North-East, Nepal, Bangladesh etc. Catering to the North-East through Bangladesh is cost-effective with reduced transit time, he pointed out. Of late, Kolkata has been seeing enhanced activities, which will continue, he said. Logistics efficiency and connectivity are critical for a country the size of India for sustainable economic growth. The government recognises this and has therefore launched initiatives like National Logistics Policy and PM Gati Shakti for holistic logistics and infrastructure development, he said. He also alluded to the government's focus on the North-East and said that the opening of the Maitri Setu bridge between Tripura and Bangladesh will pave the way for making Agartala a hub for the region. This opens up opportunities for the trade; in fact, a lot of investment is happening in warehousing there, he pointed out. The multimodal logistics park set to come up at Jogighopa in Assam on over 300 acres with huge investment is a big positive for the North-East. He called on stakeholders to open up businesses in the North-East.

# Eastern Star Awards 2024 honours some of the best in the business amid an appreciative industry gathered in strength



## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



DR. PIYUSH KANTI ACHARYA,  
NORTH SEA SHIPPING & LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.

## PORT / TERMINAL OF THE YEAR - CONTAINERISED CARGO

### PORT OF THE YEAR - CONTAINERISED CARGO



SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE PORT  
(FORMERLY KOLKATA PORT TRUST)

### TERMINAL OF THE YEAR - CONTAINERISED CARGO



VISAKHA CONTAINER TERMINAL PVT. LTD.

### PORT OF THE YEAR - NON-CONTAINERISED CARGO



PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY

### SHIPPING AGENT OF THE YEAR - CONTAINER



SAMSARA GROUP

**CONTAINER SHIPPING LINE OF THE YEAR -  
EUROPE, AMERICA & AFRICA TRADE LANES**



**MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY**

**CONTAINER SHIPPING LINE OF THE YEAR -  
FAR EAST TRADE LANE**



**REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES**

**SHIPPING AGENT OF THE YEAR -  
BREAK BULK OPERATOR**



**SEAHORSE SHIP AGENCIES PVT. LTD.**

**SHIPPING AGENT OF THE YEAR -  
DRY BULK OPERATOR**



**SAMSARA GROUP**

**FEEDER OPERATOR OF THE YEAR**



**SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE (I) PVT. LTD.**

**NVOCC OF THE YEAR  
(EXIM - SPECIAL EQUIPMENT)**



**GOODRICH MARITIME PRIVATE LIMITED**

**NVOCC OF THE YEAR (EXIM - GP)**



**(On basis of Volume) -  
EXPRESSWAY CARGO MOVERS PVT. LTD.**



**(On basis of Growth) -  
AUSTERE LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.**

## FREIGHT FORWARDER OF THE YEAR



(On basis of Growth) -  
VIVEK FREIGHT & LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.



(On basis of Volume) -  
SPEEDWAYS LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.

## FREIGHT BROKER OF THE YEAR (IT'S A TIE)



JAIN SHIPPING AGENCY



M. L. CHOPRA SHIPPING PVT. LTD.

## LCL CONSOLIDATOR OF THE YEAR



EMU LINES PVT. LTD.

## INLAND CONTAINER DEPOT OPERATOR OF THE YEAR



ALLIED ICD SERVICES LTD.

## CONTAINER FREIGHT STATION OPERATOR OF THE YEAR (MULTIPLE LOCATIONS)



CENTURY PLYBOARDS (I) LTD. – CFS DIVISION

## STEVEDORE OF THE YEAR



RIPLEY & CO. STEVEDORING & HANDLING PVT. LTD.

**CONTAINER FREIGHT STATION OPERATOR  
OF THE YEAR (SPECIFIC - HALDIA)**



**A. L. LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.**

**CONTAINER FREIGHT STATION OPERATOR  
OF THE YEAR (SPECIFIC - KOLKATA)**



**PHONEX LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.**

**CUSTOMS BROKER OF THE YEAR (EXPORT)**



**(On basis of Volume) -  
P. D. PRASAD & SONS PVT. LTD.**



**(On basis of Growth) -  
SDLS LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.**

**CUSTOMS BROKER OF THE YEAR - NEPAL CARGO**



**HR CLEARING & FORWARDING PVT. LTD.**

**CUSTOMS BROKER OF THE YEAR (IMPORT)**



**(On basis of Volume) -  
AKSHOY KUMAR GHOSH & SONS**

**CUSTOMS BROKER OF THE YEAR (IMPORT) (ON BASIS OF GROWTH) (IT'S A TIE)**



**PROTOCOL GROUP**



**TRANS LOG-SHIP PVT. LTD.**

## ROAD TRANSPORT - FLEET OPERATOR & OWNER OF THE YEAR (IT'S A TIE)



SPEEDWAYS LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.



M/S MOHD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN

## ROAD TRANSPORT OPERATOR OF THE YEAR - BANGLADESH CARGO



BEHAG OVERSEAS

## CONTAINER REPAIRER OF THE YEAR



STAR CONTAINER SERVICES

## ROAD TRANSPORT OPERATOR OF THE YEAR - NEPAL CARGO (IT'S A TIE)



JAYESH LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.



HANUMAN ROADWAYS

## PROJECT CARGO MOVER OF THE YEAR



PRISM LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.

## PROJECT CARGO FORWARDER OF THE YEAR



M. K. AGENCY

## BUNKER SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR



INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LIMITED

## LOGISTICS SUPERBRAND OF THE YEAR



CENTURY PLYBOARDS (I) LTD.

## SHIPPING & LOGISTICS FAMILY BUSINESS AWARD



THE PDP GROUP

## GenNext Entrepreneur of the Year



MR. VAIBHAV SINGH CHOPRA,  
M. L. CHOPRA SHIPPING PVT. LTD.

## LOGISTICS COMPANY OF THE YEAR



PHONEX GROUP

## DYNAMIC LOGISTICS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



MR. SUSHIL DUGAR,  
BALMER LAWRIE & CO. LTD.

## AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SHIPPING & LOGISTICS



SRAVAN SHIPPING SERVICES PVT. LTD.

## YOUNG LOGISTICS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



MR. ANSHUMAN BANKA,  
PRISM LOGISTICS PVT. LTD.

## END-TO-END LOGISTICS SOLUTION PROVIDER OF THE YEAR



FREYA SHIPPING SERVICES PVT. LTD.

## DYNAMIC ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



MR. ANKAN CHANDA,  
UNIWIDES CONTAINER LINE PVT. LTD.

## WOMAN PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



MS. IPSHITA BHATTACHARYA,  
MSC AGENCY (INDIA) PRIVATE LIMITED

## THE EMINENT JURY WAS FELICITATED

### JURY CHAIRMAN

- Mr Ashutosh Jaiswal, President (Int'l Business, Shipping & Logistics), Century Plyboards (I) Ltd. & Director, Century Ports Ltd.

### JURY MEMBERS

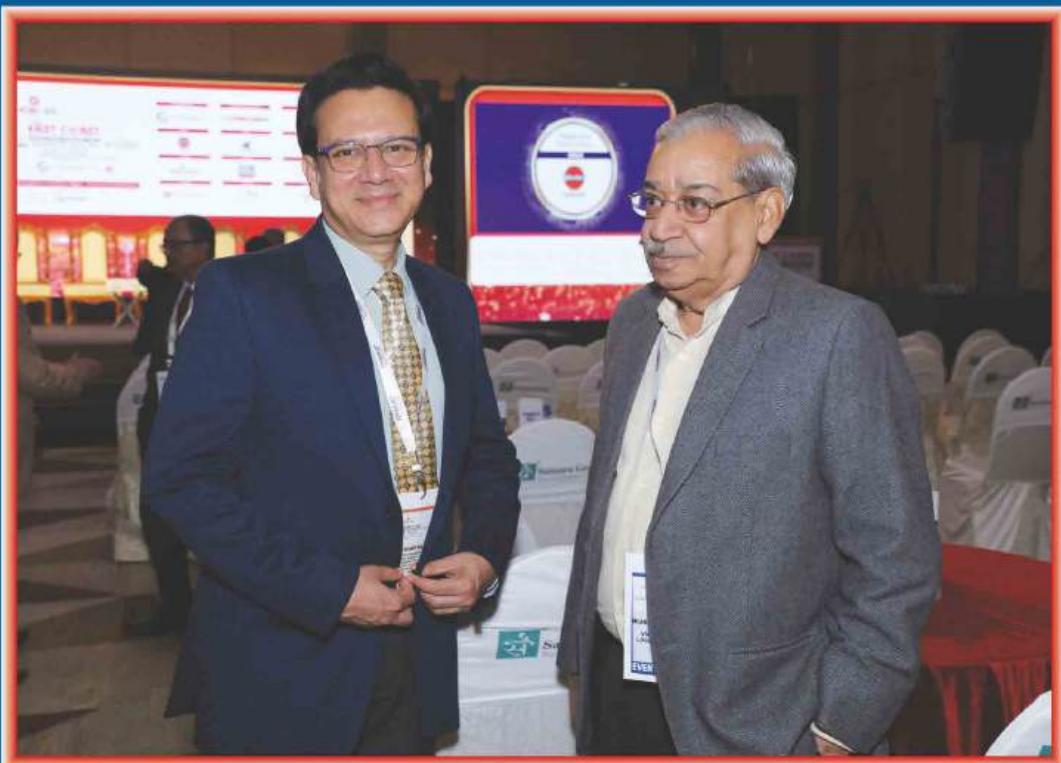
- Ms Tanusree Jasu, Branch Manager, Far Shipping India Pvt. Ltd.
- Mr Jagajit Singh, Managing Director, JMR Freight Forwarder Private Limited
- Mr Vijay Kumar Agarwal, Managing Director, Sun Glow Freight & Cargo Pvt. Ltd.
- Mr Sanjoy Ghosh, Executive Director, KYC Cargo Services Pvt. Ltd.



The Awards Jury was felicitated by Mr Ravi Shankar Rajhans (third from left), Traffic Manager, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port. They were Mr Vijay Kumar Agarwal, Mr Jagajit Singh (first and second from left), and Mr Ashutosh Jaiswal, Ms Tanusree Jasu and Mr Sanjoy Ghosh (fourth, fifth and sixth from left)

# THE FRATERNITY WAS PRESENT IN STRENGTH









# Thank You



**Event Partners, Speakers, Panelists, Jury & Delegates  
for making  
ECMF 2024 & Eastern Star Awards 2024  
Grand Success**

## EVENT PARTNERS

As on 04/01/2024

### PRESENTING / TITLE



### POWERED BY



### IN ASSOCIATION WITH



### CO-POWERED BY



### HOSTED BY



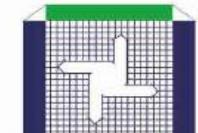
### HOST PORT



### PLATINUM



### GOLD



### SILVER



### ASSOCIATE

