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## PAGE - 3

**INS Sunayna** visits South African port of Durban



## PAGE - 5

T. S. Lines to launch second loop to India's...



#### PAGE - 6

**Goa Port** to Procure **Mobile Harbor** Crane ...



## **PAGE - 10**

Work on the truncated North **South Corridor** may begin ...

# FFFAI Women's Wing visits India- Bangladesh Border - Petrapole to understand opportunities & challenges

FFAI organized a Women's wing delegation visit to India - Bangladesh Border with the objective to explore opportunities as well as understand challenges especially for the women logistics professionals, the Women's Wing of FFFAI paid a visit to Petrapole (India in West Bengal)-Benapole (Bangladesh) border on August 6, 2023, which was led by Ms. Chaitaly Mehta, Convenor, Wing, FFFAI. The Women's delegation consisted of Mrs. Philomena Pereira, Ms. Phoram Sampat, Ms. Rajshree Verma, Ms. Subbhulakshmi, Ms. Rewa Mehrotra, Ms. Anita Juneja, Ms. Suparna Banerjee, Ms. Kinjal Shah, and Ms. Anusree Datta and Mr. Vinod Mehrotra.

Petrapole-Benapole border is near Bongaon in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal and it is the only land port in south Bengal. Petrapole is also the largest land customs station in Asia.

Sharing her experience on the visit and interactions with the LPAI officials Ms. Chaitaly

said, "Petrapole is managed by the Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) where LPAI administers and manages all the facilities, infrastructure, etc with futuristic views. It was very interesting to learn and see Women working in Petrapole. The women workforce at LPAI constitutes more than 12% of its total employees at this Land Port. The Women Workforce is maximum in BSF followed by Customs, Immigration, etc."

Turn to page -2 >>



FFFAI Women's Wing visit to Bangladesh Border



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Sagar Sandesh Wednesday, August 30, 2023

# FFFAI Women's Wing visits India- Bangladesh.....From Page: 1

According to Ms. Chaitaly, the purpose of the visit was to understand what differentiates an ICP from an airport to a seaport and ICD, how logistics activities are carried out at an ICP and what exactly is an ICP. Especially, challenges before the women logistics practitioners at a border customs post were the focus area.

The FFFAI Women's Wing highlighted Convenor some startling facts pertaining to the Petrapole border. She pointed out that Petrapole has recorded the largest Cross Border Trade through Land; the highest trade for any land border in South Asia; Highest trade for any land border in South Asia; daily influx and outgo of around 8-10 thousand passengers per day; daily cargo trucks in and out 800 to 1000 again the highest for any border trade.

She lauded the LPAI initiatives on the digitalization of international trade via this border. "E-Suvidha Portal launched a couple of months ago has brought down the waiting time from 30-40 days for cargo vehicles to just 48 hrs. In addition,

According to **Ms. Chaitaly,** Petrapole has ICEGATE thus does are being filed online unlike manual derstand what differentiates an before," **Ms. Chaitaly shared.** 

She also informed that Plant Quarantine and Animal Quarantine offices are located inside Petrapole ICP and Talks with FSSAI are underway. Cold Storage Room facilities are readily available.

Apart from the facilities for cargo to facilitate EXIM trade, a new state-of-the-art Passenger Terminal is being constructed and expected to be operational by December 2023.

In addition, Yatri Subhidha has recently been launched for International Passengers – where passengers can book online slots and there will be separate gates and counters for quick immigration clearances like Digiyatra Facilities.

Ms. Chaitaly commended the LPAI team comprising Mr. Kamlesh Saini, Manager, LPAI Petrapole Land Port and Mr. Shobhan Biswas, Executive Assistant, LPAI, Petrapole Land Port for their tremendous support to the FFFAI team during their visit. The LPAI officials also provided details on Petrapole through PPT

regarding how this strategic land port has become one of India's busiest land ports and what it entails for the future.

Earlier FFFAI Women team had an opportunity to interact with Mr. Aditya Mishra, Chairman, LPAI, one day prior in Kolkata when he spoke about LPAI and its future in Indian Logistics Industry in a special session during the FFFAI EC meeting conducted in Kolkata.

Remarkably, Mr. Anil Kumar Singh, AC Customs, Petrapole Land Port also met with the FFFAI Women's Wing members to elaborate on the Customs role and their area of operations at this land port.

In addition, the FFFAI team met with **Mr. Alok Singh**, CO, 145 Bn BSF, Petrapole Land Port under whose seasoned command Petrapole's security lies. The FFFAI members walked up to the Zero point both at the cargo and passenger terminals.

"FFFAI Women's Wing would like to thank the LPAI team at Petrapole Land Border, Customs, and BSF for making this visit very memorable. FFFAI Women's Wing wishes LPAI Land Port Petrapole all the best for its future endeavors and congratulations in advance for the opening of the new Passenger terminal," Ms. Chaitaly expressed.

The visit was coordinated by Calcutta Customs House Agents Association (CCHAA) with the LPI Petrapole. Commenting on the significance of this visit Mr. Sudip Dev, Vice Chairman FFFAI and President CCHAA said, "We from the FFFAI & CCHAA are thankful for the arrangements that ICP Petrapole has made for the Women's Wing. Their commitment and contribution towards Women in Logistics is commendable and this visit would have a huge impact among the logistics professionals at large to explore business opportunities utilizing the ICP Petrapole."

Commenting on the significance of this visit **Mr. Shankar Shinde**, Chairman, FFFAI said that this is one of the World Bank's initiatives to seek more women's participation in logistics and also provide opportunities on Land Customs Stations for women to play an important role.

