

## Paradip Port : Centre of Rich Marine Heritage of Orissa.

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Orissa, famous as Kalinga, in ancient times, has a long maritime history and tradition which had developed owing to its close association with the Sea. Orissa had a rich maritime heritage. Its prosperity chiefly depended upon its flourishing maritime trade and overseas colonies. Being situated on the shore of the Bay of Bengal its stretchy coast-line studded with several ports, since the pre-centuries A.D. facilitated overseas contact with many foreign countries like the Roman Empire, Ceylon, China, Burma, the islands of Indonesia-Java, Bali, Sumatra and Borneo, Malaya collectively known as the Suvarnadipa (the island of gold) in ancient time. Besides a favourable geographical setting it possessed a band of daring adventurous Sailors and Seamen. Mostly it acclaimed as Kalinga Sahasika – the brave of Kalingans in the Sanskrit literature. Maritime adventure was, indeed, in the blood of the mercantile community of Kalinga who sailed far and wide in search of wealth. The maritime intercourse between overseas world and east coast of India, including Orissa, may go back well into the pre-historic period. The merchants, navigators and different categories of people from various parts used to appear at different interval of time on the ports of east coast of India where they had established trading centres. The ports of Dantapura, Kalinga Nagar, Toshali, Singhpur, Pithunda, Tamralipta, Paloura, Apheterdan, Kantakasila, Dosarene and Chelitala etc have been referred as important ports of Kalinga. The maritime activities of the people of ancient Orissa starting from the Port at Kalingapattanam, Palur, Chitrotpala, Dhamra, Tanvalitra down to far off Eashernlands of Simla, Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo, Shyam, Indochina, Burma for trade and

colonization. There was a time when the present Bay of Bengal was known as sea of Kalinga due to predominance of the Oriya Sailors and navigators over this part of the Indian Ocean.

It was a travesty of history that at the time of Independence a state with one of the richest maritime traditions namely 'Kalinga' or modern Orissa did not have a port of its own. The laying of the foundation stone of port of Paradip on 3rd January, 1962 by the then Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in the presence of the then Chief Minister of Orissa Biju Patnaik was therefore the fulfillment of a long cherished dream of the people of Orissa. It Started as a Port of State Government, then it was opened to traffic in March, 1966. Soon thereafter and Port was declared a Major Port on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1966. Located at 80°20' on the east coasts of India, Paradip Port stands on an artificial lagoon carved out from the landmass with two break waters at the mouth of the lagoon so designed that the Port remains navigable throughout the year. Offering a depth of 13 meters with a channel less than a kilometer long from the roads where the ships wait for berth, Paradip Port's main advantage lies in its nearness to deep sea. In fact Paradip Port is considerable to be one of the deepest inner harbour ports. The absence of rock surface upto 40 meters below the mean sea level makes it possible to go for even deeper berths. The Port started as a mono commodity Port intended mainly to cater to export of iron ore from Orissa to Japan. There was only one berth when the Port started. As trade grew more berths were added. One more berth was added in the year 1984-1985. By the year 1995 the Port had eight berths consisting of one oil jetty, one dedicated berth for fertilizers raw material,

one iron ore berth and the rest meant for general cargo. In fact there were eight and half berths and the 9<sup>th</sup> berth came into operation when the other half was completed in the year 2000. Night navigation was started in the year 1998. The port is now adding four more berths taking the total number of berths to thirteen. Two of these new berths being inaugurated today are backed by a mechanized coal handling plant of 20 million capacity. Thus while the number of berths are going from nine to thirteen, the capacity of the port is taking a quantum jump from 14 million to 34 million ton, leading it, in terms of capacity, to the forefront of Indian Ports. Incidentally two more general berths with a capacity of 3 million ton are also being inaugurated again which along with an oil jetty of 6 million capacity about to be completed during this year will increase the port's capacity further to 43 million ton.

The Cargo handling in Paradip Port has grown significantly over the years. In fact during the year 2000-01 the total cargo of Paradip Port grew from 13.92 million tons of previous year to 19.9 million tons recording a growth of 45.94% which is highest in Ports history and highest among all the other major ports of India taking the Port from its previous 9<sup>th</sup> position amongst the major ports to 6<sup>th</sup> position in terms of volume of cargo. Paradip Port's cargo is expected to go further with the commissioning of the Nilachal Steel Plant in the immediate future and the oil Refinery of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, in the near future. The I PA's projections predict a cargo turnover of 64 million tons by the year 2007 which is supported by 'VISION 2020' prepared by RITES.

Really Paradip Port is a growing Port and is expected to grow further. The Oil Refinery is likely to add about 9 million ton cargo besides giving a fillip to growth of industry and exports in the region. A "Special Economic Zones" has already been planned. There is also a massive growth in export of iron ore and the Daitari Bansapani Railway Line when completed is expected to give a further boost to export of iron ore through the port. The Port is in the process of inviting BOT bids for clean cargo berth in its southern site for

handling of food items and containers. Paradip Port is thus poised to Become not only a leading Port on the east coast but also a nucleus of development in the region.

The coal handling plant being commissioned at Paradip Port is not an ordinary cargo handling Plant. The total cost of the Plant which includes the loan component as well as contribution from the Port's own resources stands at Rs.703 Crore excluding interest during construction. The coal handling system in Paradip was designed by BHPE Kinhill Joint Venture, a leading consultancy firm of Australia and has been executed by a number of nationally and internationally reputed agencies such as L & T, Stranthen and Henshaw, Ircon, Kripp Germany, Afcons, Buskaies HCLSTP and Subha Project. This is the first system in which the cargo can be unloaded from a moving train to be loaded directly in to a ship waiting at the berth. The plant provides enormous flexibility.

The coal handling plant is not merely a process of mechanization. It defies comparison with any other such plant in the country by sheet volume and technology. It becomes a milestone in development of Paradip Port both in terms of quality and quantity. From the point of quantity it signifies the introduction of most modern technology in bulk handling system. From the point of quantity it adds capacity of 20 million tones which is like the capacity of a port by itself whose significance can be understood from the fact that the total capacity of Paradip Port is also adding two more berths on the same day. Over and above the two coal berths which are part of the mechanical coal handling system, two other general cargo berths on the western side of the Port are also ready for commissioning on the same day. All together Paradip Port is adding a capacity of 23 million tone to its existing 14 million tons making the total capacity of the port jump to nearly 37 million tons.

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