

SOP for Major Port for handling issues arising in view of the Geopolitical disturbance in the Middle East

The Ministry of Port, Shipping and Waterways has carried out extensive consultation with all stakeholders and decided to implement the following SoP to handle the issues arising from the geopolitical disturbance in the Middle East :

1. The Port Chairpersons should have periodical meetings with stakeholders such as shipping lines, exporters, terminal operators, MMD, customs etc., to closely monitor the situation and ascertain and address legitimate concerns.
2. Each Port shall appoint a nodal officer at the level of HOD or Dy HOD, who will be the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for addressing the issues coming up for the consideration of the Port. The Port shall publish the Name, Designation, Contact Number and Email ID of Nodal officer on its website and the concerned officer shall be available on 24x7 basis.
3. The Nodal officer shall be responsible for taking up the matter with the competent authority and ensure that the decision/action is completed in 24 hours' time. In case of the issues, which require other agencies' involvement like Customs notification of new area or bonding of new storage area etc., shall be completed within 72 hours' time.
4. Ports may consider the following facilitation measures, as appropriate:
 - a. To permit the storage of cargo destined for the Middle East as transshipment cargo during the affected period.
 - b. To allot additional storage area, if required, for storing such cargo during the crisis period.
 - c. Facilitate berthing of ad-hoc call vessels for dropping or picking Middle East bound transshipment cargo.
 - d. To expeditiously facilitate 'Back to Town' movement of export cargo lying in port premises in co-ordination with Customs.
 - e. Provide priority handling for perishable cargo to prevent deterioration.
 - f. Give priority consideration to export cargo returning from the Middle East.

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- g. Facilitate additional bunkering capacity, wherever feasible, to meet potential demand.
5. Ports shall coordinate closely with agencies such as Customs, DGFT and other relevant authorities to ensure implementation of the above measures within the stipulated timelines.
 6. Ports may consider requests from users regarding reduction, waiver or remission of charges (such as reefer plugging charges, storage rent, change of vessel charges, etc.) on a case-to-case basis, depending on the prevailing circumstances at the port.
 7. This SoP will come into force from the date of issuance and will remain in force until withdrawn. The Ministry will review the situation and decide on continuation or modification of the SoP as required.
 8. The above SOP shall be applicable for the Middle East bound cargo/vessels which are getting affected due to ongoing geopolitical crisis in West Asia.
 9. A daily action taken report should be submitted to the Ministry.

