

AISATS Coolport: 62% growth in a year

AISATS Coolport has successfully completed one year of its operations. **Mike Chew**, CEO, AISATS, shares the key highlights and achievements during the year in an exclusive interview with **CARGOTALK**.



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What are the core USPs of the AISATS Coolport?

The AISATS Coolport is the first integrated on-airport perishable cargo handling centre in India. The facility was established to aid the Government of Karnataka's vision to make the state a gateway for perishable and pharmaceutical cargo in South India. Spread over an area of 11,000 square metres, the COOLPORT undertakes comprehensive export and import cargo handling under one roof through the extensive range of facilities offered. The perishable cargo terminal has an annual handling capacity of 40,000 metric tonnes, with the ability to meet the handling demands of temperature-sensitive cargo ranging from flowers, pharmaceutical products, seafood, poultry, dairy, and fruits and vegetables. The dedicated perishable centre comprises of 17 cold storage rooms with customised temperature controls ranging from -250C to 250C and Refrigerated Queue Lanes with a temperature range of 20C to 80C for unitised shipments, depending on the kind of perishable commodity. This key feature allows perishables to be stored in temperature surroundings required to maintain efficacy of the product. This cutting-edge perishable centre is also equipped with a Drug Controller Lab Testing Facility, Plant Quarantine Inspection and Certification Facility and in house Custom Clearances which facilitate in reducing the dwell time of the shipments. Dedicated X-ray machines for perishable and pharma products avoid cross contamination of shipments.

What have been the key highlights and achievements during the year?

The AISATS COOLPORT was built to handle the increasing demand for temperature-sensitive cargo in South India. Since its inception, this purpose-built facility has provided seamless handling of perishables, using the



cold chain infrastructure, technology and well-trained personnel. The AISATS COOLPORT has witnessed a dynamic journey since the start of its operations in 2016, with many firsts and accreditations to its name. It is the first on-airport cargo handling centre in the country to secure the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification in order to ensure safety of the perishable cargo. The HACCP certification is an international accreditation which guarantees that the highest safety standards are in place at the COOLPORT to ensure safety and freshness of the perishable product. Besides this, the COOLPORT also has the Good Distribution Practices (GDP) certification in place, which assures that pharmaceuticals are handled in line with the guidelines of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

As a proponent of technological innovation, AISATS has developed and launched the 'AISATS Cargo App' to facilitate better cargo tracking at the AISATS COOLPORT and at the Air Freight Terminal located at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru. The user-friendly app provides



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transparency in the supply chain and furnishes real time data on flight schedules, Air Way Bill (AWB), shipment tracking and e-Delivery Order (e-DO) status to all the stakeholders. The perishable centre has also initiated reefer trucking services between the perishable centre (COOLPORT) and major cities in South and Central India. This value-added service was started with the aim to add / extend an unbroken cold chain from the source of produce till the warehouse. The reefer vehicles are equipped with data loggers and GPS (Global Positioning System) for accurate tracking.

Are there any plans to enhance the capacity?

The centre is designed to handle 40,000 MT of

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perishable cargo per annum and, assuming a year-to-year growth of 13 per cent for temperature-sensitive cargo, we are confident of providing high quality warehousing and handling services for the next few years followed by subsequent capacity expansions in the years that follow.

What was the percentage of international and domestic cargo handled by the AISATS COOLPORT since its inception? Which perishable product accounted for the highest export/import?

Since the start of trial operations in October 2016, the volume of perishable cargo handled at the AISATS COOLPORT has been

20,135 metric tonnes for international cargo (export and import).

Among the various types of perishable cargo handled, fruits and vegetables account for 75 per cent of the entire cargo volume traded at AISATS COOLPORT, followed by 15 per cent for pharmaceuticals, five per cent for cut flowers and five per cent for miscellaneous temperature-sensitive cargo. Although trading of perishable cargo has shown significant growth, pharma handling has shown tremendous potential within the Indian pharmaceutical market, which, according to ASSOCHAM, is poised to exceed USD 55 million by 2020.

In fact, the COOLPORT has observed a 62 per cent growth in pharmaceutical handling within the first year of its operations. To give you an idea of the surge in demand for pharma handling at Bengaluru, AISATS COOLPORT has also handled pharma shipments from Chennai, Hyderabad, Goa, Mumbai and Visakhapatnam. The perishables handling centre has effortlessly handled 60 Envirotainers, 13 VaQ-Tainers and other

temperature-controlled packing units such as World Courier Cocoon, VIP box, Chronos Express, Icebox, etc. during the first year of operations. To maintain the perfect ambient temperature for pharma shipments during transit, the AISATS COOLPORT also provides single use custom made thermal cover for US and Euro pharma skids along with thermal packing and labelling services.

What is the current scenario of the cold chain industry?

The Indian logistics sector is at the threshold of change, where logistics players are realising the urgent need to adopt cold chain technology as an integral part of the supply chain. India currently has approx. 6,300 cold storage facilities with a total capacity of 30.11 metric tonnes per facility, which is only able to cater to 11 per cent of the country's total perishable produce. The cold supply chain network protects perishables from decomposition, textural degradation, discolouring, and microbial growth, thereby preserving the freshness and increasing the shelf life of the product. It is imperative for India to develop an efficient cold chain infrastructure that maintains the integrity of the supply chain at all stages in order to retain, and to potentially surpass, its position as the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables, and as one of the largest producers of milk.

Mobilising large-scale investments, modernising the food supply chain, adequate infrastructure and updated technology, thoroughly trained personnel, and uninterrupted power supply are some initiatives that can help transform the Indian cold chain industry into a major player within the global markets. In addition, the government recently conferred the logistics industry with infrastructure status, which will enable the industry to acquire cheaper finances to develop cold chains, warehouses and industrial parks.