

Global Geo-Political Perils Taken up at AMICIE Singapore Meet



Weathering Geo-political Risks for International Trade and Shipping was the theme of the recent seminar held in Singapore by AMICIE on 14th March.

AMICIE, meaning 'friends of the court' (from amicus curiae), and the full form of which stands as the 'Association of Maritime International Commercial Interests and Expertise' is a seven-year old Society registered in Chennai in India.

Capt R. Venkat, its Vice President, welcomed the gathering, and continued as moderator after Capt Sury Pullat the founder President explained what AMICIE stands for with focused efforts, and Capt Suresh Amirapu, President delved into the theme contemporaneously affecting one and all as consumers, impacted by policies, trade, shipping, logistics, et al.

It is well known that shipping/trade economics being derived demands of trade and logistics remain at the mercy of policies driven by politics, money and exchange rates, superimposed on natural resources, locational advantages, seasonal variations and transportation costs for delivered values with tariffs (GATT, WTO), duties, and the likes with unforeseeable fluctuations of Supply-Demand imbalances, punctuated with easy/hard funding and entrepreneurial instincts, and hence do not lend themselves easily to prognosis or forecast!

The panelists were drawn from a wide cross-section of trade, shipping, logistics and segments and sectors of the connected industries with

age, knowledge, expertise, gender balance, and nationalities, and included two participants from the United States as well.

Scenario Planning and Crisis Management for 'Worst Case Scenario' as in 'hope for the best, plan for the worst' like in Murphy's Law of Risk Assessment with organizational resilience, was the apt starter. Know your counter party, as in 'arranged' Indian marriages, the oft sought 'first class charterers', with Chartering & Operations together pursuing technical (meaning paralegal) process to find solutions was suggested, citing 'Cherry' damage on MAERSK SALTORO, hostile jurisdiction said to be poised to deny limitation to DALI Baltimore bridge demolition disaster, YM TRUTH allision claims spreading globally with Hamburg and even Rotterdam Rules (Tunisia, Georgia) as scary ones!

The Electronic Bill of Lading is yet to gain popularity, not in favour to hide identities, with cargoes in boxes found to be 'round tripping', Bulk cargoes getting blended for various reasons like quality, pricing, COAs with sourcing and delivery, inventory management, etc; in other words trade expediting suitable solutions!

Though Trump and Tariff impact were viewed with worries, the consensus is that shipping is used to such impacts, with money, politics and religions running the world with trade balancing, with US Dollar as the dominant main currency after the cold-war, with energy resources enabling globalization. Recent UNCTAD report on such impact and unreliability of Trump's policies and its effects were also drawn attention to.