

SMA-2015 Recognises Maritime Excellence



The 'Samudra Manthan Awards (SMA) 2015' ceremony was held on November 6 at a glittering event at the plush Hyatt Regency Hotel in Mumbai. Fourteen Ratnas (jewels) were singled out from the Indian maritime industry and honoured at the eagerly awaited event organised by Bhandarkar Shipping Events. Many top executives from the industry were present to support the recognitions. The convenor of the event Capt Vivek Bhandarkar expressed the hope that the Awards would spur the industry to raise the bar of excellence while Ashish Pednekar extended best wishes to the nominees.

'Samudra Manthan' — the churning of the ocean — is a well-known Hindu mythological tale that explains the origin of 'Amrit', the elixir of immortality.

Among the many luminaries present at the ceremony were Gopal Shetty, Member of Parliament; Subhash Desai, Minister for Industries, Government of Maharashtra; Sanjeev Behari, Principal Chief Commissioner of Customs; Deepak

Shetty, Director General of Shipping; renowned Bollywood film personality Nana Patekar, and R. Natarajan, Inspector General of the Indian Coast Guard.

Subhash Desai underscored the importance of the Awards in creating benchmarks for the industry and in providing an opportunity for winners to grow and raise their profile.

In a video message, the Union Road, Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari congratulated the winners of the awards and urged the maritime industry to engage in a

dialogue with his Ministry through the 'Samvad' initiative. In another video message, Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, said that excellence needed to be recognised as it inspired people to do more and take the country forward. He congratulated the organisers for taking the initiative in this regard.

Gopal Shetty congratulated the winners of the awards and stressed the 'huge' opportunities that were available in the maritime sector. He said he was confident that things would improve soon.



Deepak Shetty felt that the country needed to leverage its logistics, services and entrepreneurial capabilities and to 'reinvent, reengineer and leverage IT-enabled services'.

Sanjeev Behari spoke at length about the importance of healthy competition, later detailing the many steps that the Nhava Sheva customs in Navi Mumbai were taking for facilitating port development. He wanted the logistics and maritime industry to move ahead with excellence uppermost in mind.

Actor Nana Patekar spoke about his work with the families of farmers who were destitute after they had lost their sole breadwinners. Besides regular financial support, the families needed manpower support too, he pointed out. Supporting his cause, a group of master mariners presented a cheque of ₹2.25 lakh to Patekar, a gesture much appreciated.

As the curtains came down on the well conducted ceremony, many delegates expressed the sentiment that the evening would be cherished for a long time to come.

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