

Visit of West Bengal Business delegation led by Shri Nirupam Sen, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Industries, Government of West Bengal to the Federal Republic of Germany from April 10-20, 2008

Shri Nirupam Sen, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industries, West Bengal led a composite officials and business delegation to the States of Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Baden Württemberg and Berlin in the Federal Republic of Germany from April 10-20, 2008.

The Minister had discussions with the Ministers of Economic Affairs in the States of Bavaria, Lower Saxony and Baden Württemberg, interacted with business companies (including field/factory visits) and Chambers of Commerce in Munich, Hannover, Stuttgart and Berlin and also inaugurated the Bengal Business Centre in Munich.

The important highlights of the visit are given below:

(I) Bavaria

Shri Nirupam Sen alongwith other members of the delegation met with the Bavarian Minister of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology, Ms Emilia Müller, on April 10, 2008. Shri Sen underlined India's rapid growth and made a detailed presentation of West Bengal outlining the strategic location and advantages of the State for receiving investment. He recalled the strategic partnership between India and Germany and the visit of 'Invest-in-Bavaria' delegation last year to Kolkata. The business opportunities available in West Bengal in sectors like automobiles and auto-components, Information Technology, Iron and Steel, Chemicals and Petro-chemicals (including down stream plastics), Engineering industries etc. was highlighted by the Minister. He also referred to the rich talent pool of technically-qualified personnel available in West Bengal.

Minister Müller, who was accompanied by senior officials of her Ministry including of "Invest-in-Bavaria", responded positively saying she was very impressed with the developments in India in general and West Bengal in particular. Around fifty Indian companies including all the IT majors were already present in Bavaria. Minister Müller also touched upon Bavaria's strengths like innovation, research and development, "cluster" approach and strong SMEs, etc. Minister Müller mentioned that she was planning to visit

India in end-Nov. 2008. Shri Sen extended an invitation to Minister Müller to also include Kolkata in her itinerary and expressed the keenness of the Government of West Bengal to develop a robust SME sector in West Bengal. Minister Müller thanked him for the invitation.

Bavarian presentations of Bio-Tech and Automotive 'Clusters' (April 10/11)

The West Bengal delegation met with Prof. Domdey, CEO of Biotech Cluster, Bavaria on April 10 and Prof. Nassauer, Head of the Bayern Innovativ GmbH on April 11. The discussions centered around cooperation in cluster development covering the fields of bio-tech and automotives. The Bayern Innovativ GmbH expressed willingness to facilitate the organisation of an auto summit with the Government of West Bengal. **By way of follow-up, a 'Bavaria-Bengal business summit' is proposed to be organized in Kolkata on May 26 (the eve of FC Bayern's football match) by Invest-in-Bavaria involving FC Bayern's sponsors and Indian companies.**

Visit/Meeting with Messe München International (April 11)

The Messe München Managing Director and his team made a detailed presentation on the Munich Trade Fair and its activities including projects completed and under implementation in various countries. The New Munich Trade Fair Centre, opened in 1998 is one of the most modern trade fair centres in the world. Shri Sen mentioned about the existing 'Milan Mela' facility set-up in Kolkata whose phase-I was under implementation. At the same time, the West Bengal Government had earmarked land and was planning a more comprehensive second phase for which he sought Messe München's cooperation. A detailed presentation on the Milan Mela project was made by Dr. Sabyasachi Sen, Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries, Government of West Bengal. The delegation also toured the Munich Trade Fair grounds. The Minister invited the Managing Director, Messe München to visit Kolkata. The latter responded that he planned to visit Kolkata in Nov, 2008. It was agreed that in the interim, interaction could take place among concerned officials for a preliminary evaluation of the project site, discussion of the cooperation parametres, etc.

BMW (April 14)

During meeting with Mr. David Panton, OBE, Senior Vice President of BMW, the Minister, Shri Sen pointed out the developments in West Bengal in the automotive sector and in particular the development of the 'automobile city' with numerous component suppliers. The accompanying delegation provided supplementary information by way of presentations and details. BMW responded that they were very pleased with the development of their Indian market and were also looking to introduce the 'Mini' brand in India. Further, they saw great

potential in sourcing components from India. In this context, BMW also evinced interest in the proposed 'automobile city'. The Minister and his delegation toured the BMW factory.

Inauguration of the 'Bengal Business Centre' (April 14)

Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industries, Shri Nirupam Sen inaugurated on April 14, 2008 the 'Bengal Business Centre' in a Munich premise housing business centres. The Bengal Centre, to be fully functional in a couple of months, is envisaged as a first-stop shop for providing services and information to investors in Germany interested to invest in West Bengal as also for businessmen visiting Munich/Germany/Europe. The inaugural function was well attended by around 100 guests.

Visit to Allianz Arena (April 13) – Football Match

The Minister and his delegation visited the Allianz Arena and witnessed a football game of FC Bayern who are scheduled to play a friendly football match against Mohun Bagan Club at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on May 27, 2008. In this connection, Minister handed-over a letter of welcome to Oliver Kahn (who will be playing his last match for FC Bayern in Kolkata) signed by over half-a-million fans from West Bengal.

The Minister and his delegation also visited the Konig Ludwig Bier factory and the BayernOil Refinery in Ingolstadt which is being transplanted by the Cals Refinery in Haldia. The delegation also visited Centrotherm Photovoltaics factory in Blaubeuren which is providing technical expertise to the Bhaskar Silicon PV plant in Haldia.

(II) Lower Saxony (April 15)

The Hon'ble Minister met with Mr. Walter Hirche, Minister of Economic Affairs and Industry, Government of Lower Saxony in Hannover on the 15th of April, 2008. Shri Sen highlighted the advantages of West Bengal and requested auto component manufactures in the region to explore possibilities of locating in the auto park being developed in Kharagpur. The Hannover Chamber of Commerce was also present in the meeting and mentioned that they propose to visit India in June, 2008. The Minister invited them to visit West Bengal with their delegation.

(III) Visit to Wuerzburg (April 16) *The delegation visited the HUNGER factories in Wuerzburg and Lohr Am Maine on 16th April, 2008. The HUNGER group is developing its*

Hydraulic Seals factory in Sankrail in the Howrah district. The Minister requested them to consider developing a Hydraulic Cylinders factory also in West Bengal.

(IV) Baden-Württemberg (April 17)

Shri Sen met with the Mr. Ernst Pfister, Minister of Economic Affairs Government of Baden-Württemberg and senior officials of his Ministry in Stuttgart on April 17, 2008.

Minister Pfister recalled the very good partnership between his State and India. Economic relations had “developed dynamically” and Baden-Württemberg’s exports to India had increased from € 143 million (1990) to € 1.2 billion (2007). There were 348 Baden-Württemberg companies in India. He referred to Baden-Württemberg’s strengths as (i) Mittelstand/SME companies, and (ii) hi-tech in automotives, electro-technics, mechanics, engineering, medicine etc., in many of which there were complementarities with India.

Shri Sen referred to West Bengal as an “economic powerhouse” being among the top 3 States of India for economic growth. Shri Sen also elaborated the economic scenario including core sectors covering Iron & Steel, Petrochemicals, Automotive cluster, Machine Tools, Science & Technology, Biotech & Pharmaceuticals industries and highlighted the possibilities of cooperation. In response to specific queries, the West Bengal delegation explained the situation regarding availability of skilled manpower, the tax-structure, protection for IPRs, etc. The Minister invited his Baden-Württemberg counterpart to visit West Bengal. The latter responded that he was very impressed and would consider a visit next year i.e. 2009, given also that Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg will be visiting India in Dec. 2008.

The Minister and his delegation also visited (April 17) the Daimler factory in Stuttgart which manufactures the Mercedes-Benz cars.

(V) Berlin

The Minister met with the Berlin Partner GmbH which is the State Government undertaking to promote industrial, technological and commercial relations and met with companies of the State of Berlin. The Minister highlighted the advantages of the State of West Bengal and interacted with the companies. Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries along with the delegation met with the Secretary for Commerce, Technology and Womens’ issues of the State of Berlin. The possibilities for collaboration between the States of Berlin and West

Bengal in Security Systems in the Auto Sector, Machine Tools, Chemicals and Pharma Products, Logistics, SMEs in the auto component sectors, Biotech, Optic Electronics were discussed.