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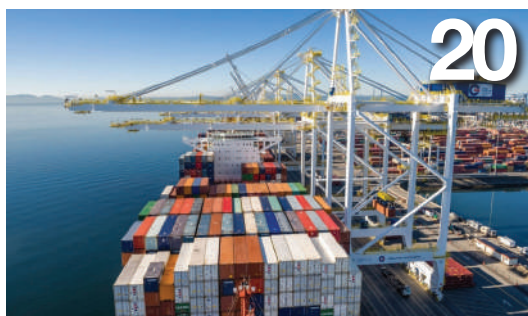
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## CATHAY PACIFIC'S cargo capacity gradually recovers after easing restrictions

Cathay Pacific's cargo capacity was only gradually recovering in April after the relaxation of stricter crew quarantine rules in the middle of the month. The Hong Kong-based airline in April saw its cargo capacity in cargo tonne km terms drop by 36.6% compared with February levels as a result of stricter quarantine measures being introduced. These rules were relaxed in mid-April for vaccinated crew, but capacity only gradually came back online. The April figure was also higher than the 25% drop off in capacity recorded by the carrier in March.



## LUFTHANSA CARGO joins hands with DB Schenker on SAF



The Lufthansa Cargo freighter with the registration D-ALFG took off for the first time with a very special design: the lettering "Flying 100% CO2 neutral powered by DB Schenker" and an illustration of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) highlight the joint mission of Lufthansa Cargo and DB Schenker. "We are delighted to have DB Schenker at our side, a partner who is so energetically promoting the reduction of CO2 in the air freight industry. The special livery gives us the opportunity to draw attention to our joint commitment worldwide Lufthansa Cargo Chief Commercial Officer.

## IATA expects strong post-pandemic air cargo market

IATA is predicting a positive outlook for air cargo demand and believes it will continue to improve as the vaccine rollout progresses



and belly hold services pick up. In a press conference, **Willie Walsh**, Director General of IATA said that airlines

'deserve great credit' for pivoting their business focus away from passenger operations and towards airfreight in a short period of time. Noting the use of freighters, Walsh said, "Airlines demonstrated great agility in responding to demand to ensure that there was sufficient supply to meet critical supply chain issues during the pandemic." He added that as passenger services pick up while the global vaccine rollout progresses, airlines will 'shift from survival mode to rebuilding'. "As that happens, we'll continue to be very focused on the environmental issues," Walsh said.



## DACHSER expands emission-free city deliveries to eleven European cities

Dachser emission-free delivery means that Dachser delivers all shipments emission-free as standard in a defined downtown area, usually the city centre with pedestrian zones. No air pollutants or greenhouse gases are released locally. Company uses battery-electric vans and trucks as well as electrically assisted cargo bikes, each tailored to local requirements. The bikes are specially designed for groupage and palletted goods weighing up to 250 kg. While the e-trucks supply micro hubs—small warehouses near the city centre—or directly deliver goods that are not suitable for bicycles due to their weight or dimensions, the cargo bike routes start at the micro hub and primarily serve pedestrian zones.



## EMIRATES set up air bridge between Dubai, 9 Indian cities to transport essentials

India has been battling a severe second wave of the COVID pandemic and hospitals in several states are running short of health workers, vaccines, oxygen, drugs and beds. Emirates has set up a humanitarian air bridge between Dubai and India to transport urgent medical and relief items, to support India in its fight to control the serious COVID-19 situation in the country. The first shipment sent as part of the Emirates India humanitarian airbridge was a consignment of over 12 tonnes of multi-purpose tents from the World Health Organization (WHO), destined for Delhi, and coordinated by the IHC in Dubai. The creation of the humanitarian air bridge between Dubai and India, is facilitated by Emirates SkyCargo, Dubai's International Humanitarian City and UN agencies, to transport urgent medical and relief items.





## DELMOS AVIATION transports oxygen concentrators to India

Delmos Aviation transported around 100 oxygen concentrators from Russia to New Delhi for the government of Rajasthan. Delmos Aviation arranged for an end-to-end logistics supply for the Rajasthan government and helped them with pre-buying formalities, legal documentation and clearance processes.

**Dr Naveen Rao**, Director – Delmos Aviation said, “We are proud to help the government in the procurement of oxygen concentrators in a short span of just three days. During this medical crisis, time-bound deliveries are very crucial. I would especially like to thank the Aeroflot Cargo management team, Centurion Logistics and Moscow Cargo warehouse for prioritising and expediting all the documentation needs, enabling a quick airlifting of the consignment.”

## CEVA LOGISTIC implementing new block train, multimodal solutions from China to European ports

CEVA Logistics continues to expand its range of ground and rail services from China to Europe, announcing a new train-ferry service from Xi'an, China, to Immingham, U.K., as well as a premium offering on the company's existing route from Xi'an to the Mukran (Sassnitz) port in Germany. Its weekly multimodal train-ferry service from Xi'an to Immingham via Kaliningrad, Russia, will provide additional freight capacity for shippers amid unprecedented demand for transport and logistics services.

The new route's pilot shipment to Immingham left Xi'an by block train on March 18, going to Kaliningrad, where the cargo was reloaded the same day onto a ferry that arrived in Immingham on April 6.



## MAERSK reports growth, high profit and additional share buy backs in Q1

A.P. Moller - Maersk had an exceptionally strong start to the year, with strong earnings and growth momentum across all our businesses in ocean, port services and logistics. The company benefitted from strong demand in a market still influenced by the pandemic and significant disruptions in global supply chains. “A.P. Moller - Maersk delivered an exceptionally strong performance in Q1 2021 with record profit for the quarter.

The high growth and profitability were driven by solid demand across Ocean, Logistics and Terminals.



## QATAR AIRWAYS CARGO convoy reaches India



Three Qatar Airways Cargo Boeing 777 freighters have reached India, carrying approximately 300 tonnes of medical supplies from around the world to support COVID-19 relief efforts. The three flights were bound for Bengaluru, Mumbai and New Delhi as part of Qatar Airways Cargo's WeQare initiative.

**Akbar Al Baker**, Group Chief Executive, Qatar Airways said, “Having seen with great sorrow the impact this further wave of COVID-19 infections has had on people in India, we knew we had to be part of the global effort to support the valiant health care workers in the country.

## VOLGA-DNEPR transports Luna-25 space aircraft from Moscow to Blagoveshchensk

Volga-Dnepr Airlines has delivered a Luna-25 full-scale mock-up from Moscow (Russia) to Blagoveshchensk (Russia) onboard an AN-124-100 freighter.

A five-tonne full-scale overall assembly of Luna-25 spacecraft designed and manufactured by NPO Lavochkin, one of the leading aerospace companies, was transported to Ignatyev airport for further trucking to the Vostochny Cosmodrome. The mock-up is intended for complex tests of technical means and systems at the cosmodrome.





## CMA CGM AIR CARGO flies 28 tonnes medical supplies to India

The CMA CGM Air Cargo's chartered Airbus A330-200 freighter, carrying 28 tonnes of medical equipment including eight oxygen plants worth more than ₹ 17 crore, landed in Delhi from Paris, France. The oxygen plants will be delivered to eight Indian hospitals, six in Delhi, one in Haryana and one in Telangana, based on needs as identified by the Indian authorities. In addition to the oxygen plants, this airfreight will also include 28 ventilators and 200 electric syringe pushers which will be distributed to several hospitals based on needs to enhance their ICU capacities.



## TIACA releases industry's first sustainability report

The International Air Cargo Association (TIACA) has released the first comprehensive study undertaken on the sustainable transformation of the air cargo industry. As part of TIACA's



sustainability programme, launched in November 2019, the organisation performed a widespread industry survey involving supply chain partners from across the globe and from each industry sector and business size. The results have been analysed and published to form a 'ground zero' assessment by which future progress can be measured. The report's findings will also feed TIACA's overall sustainability strategy and support enhanced work programmes addressing each of the organisation's three key areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, supported by innovation and partnership.

## FEDEX delivers 1,000 oxygen concentrators to India to combat COVID-19

To assist in the fight against COVID-19 in India, FedEx Express is working with organisations around the world to deliver critical medical supplies and equipment. An initial shipment of 1,000 critically needed oxygen concentrators on-board a



FedEx aircraft was delivered to New Delhi on April 30 as part of a collective initiative by multinational companies.

FedEx is also working with Direct Relief to move more than 1,800 pounds of medicine and personal protective equipment to India.

"As the impact of COVID-19 continues to grow in India, we are extremely grateful that our mission of connecting the world can bring relief to those most in need," said **Kawal Preet**, President, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa Region, FedEx Express.



## ETIHAD CARGO expands dry ice capabilities for enhanced global vaccine distribution

Etihad Cargo has strengthened its ability to transport COVID-19 vaccines around the world after receiving UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) approval to expand dry ice carrying capabilities across its Boeing Dreamliner and Boeing 777 fleets. The GCAA approval ensures the UAE national carrier's main Boeing fleet can now carry up to five times more dry ice per flight, enabling it to provide enhanced frozen and deep-frozen conditions required for various vaccine types, including the Pfizer, Moderna and Sputnik vaccines which currently need to be stored between -70°C to -18°C. "Etihad Cargo will ensure optimum safety of its expanded carrying capabilities by adhering to all regulatory requirements," said **Andre Blech**, Director Global Cargo Operations, Etihad Aviation Group.

## UPS FOUNDATION commits US\$ 1 mn to fight the COVID surge in India

The UPS Foundation has announced a \$ 1 million commitment to fight the COVID-19 surge in India. The pledge is a combination of emergency funding, in-kind transportation movements and technical expertise to provide urgent relief, as well as strategic support. "The UPS Foundation is committed to improving the well-being of com-



munities impacted by COVID-19 and we want to help alleviate the suffering in India by leveraging our partnerships, our resources and our logistics expertise," said **Nikki Clifton**, President of Social Impact and The UPS Foundation.

UPS is coordinating with strategic partners, including UNICEF, CARE, The Salvation Army, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, MAP, Medshare, Rotary Club, the US Chamber Foundation and others to mobilise critical medical supplies including oxygen concentrators, ventilators, nebulizers, respiratory supplies, PPE, COVID-19 test kits and antiviral medications to India. UPS Foundation is also providing emergency funding to CARE and The Salvation Army. CARE is supporting the Bihar state of India's health system, including activation of two temporary COVID-19 care centres with five intensive care centres to follow. In addition, The Salvation Army dollars will fund oxygen concentration facilities in hospitals to increase their capacity to treat the most serious cases.



# Aarkesh Business Solutions

## Making a mark globally

Global Footprints – a ‘customised’ website by Aarkesh Business Solutions – has been developed keeping in mind the informational requirement of present and future clients. **Anil Mantri**, Founder, Aarkesh Business Solutions shares more details.



**Anil Mantri**  
Founder  
Aarkesh Business Solutions

**Whatever the distance, wherever the location, we have logistical reach and are also capable of reverse logistics for the same**

With the launch of a ‘customised’ and informative website, Global Footprints, Aarkesh Business Solutions has truly become global. According to Founder, **Anil Mantri**, “The website has been developed, keeping in mind the informational requirement of our present and future clients. One can get a detailed understanding of the various services we provide, the locations that we service and also connect with us instantly. The platform also helps us in informing our clients of the work we have done till date, new products and services that we foray into and also what our clients have to say about us. Keeping

pace with technology and information sharing in the borderless world, this small step would imbibe confidence of our clients.”

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shipment to your warehouse. The load gets maximised, saving cost and time. “Whatever the distance, wherever the location, we have logistical reach and are also capable of reverse logistics for the same”, adds Mantri.

### DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

DILOCI offers invaluable assistance of providing sorting, packing and distribution services across any geographical location as desired by the client with an added feature of return logistics. We pick up the goods from multiple locations, on your instructions and then accumulate these at our warehouse.



# Digitalisation key to optimising supply chain

To keep the supply chain wheel moving efficiently and with more agility, technology will prove to be its best oil. **Hector Patel**, Executive Director, Jeena & Company talks about how the adoption of technology can help build an efficient vaccine and medical supply chain in India.



CT Bureau



**Hector Patel**  
Executive Director  
Jeena & Company

India is currently grappling with a fatal second wave of the COVID pandemic, with rising death tolls and an accelerated spread of infection. And while an overwhelmed healthcare system is working round the clock to help manage, treat and vaccinate as many people as they can, the Indian logistics and supply chain network is working tirelessly to ensure efficient supply of oxygen cylinders, concentrators, vaccines and medicines that are crucial in the fight against the virus. At such times, when both national and international supply chains are being activated to provide for the vital medical supplies, an efficient and agile supply chain that can leverage the best of emerging tech, is the need of the hour.

From challenges like unorganised last-mile service providers, ill-equipped warehouse facilities, and lack of trained labour to the slow pace of digital adoption, lack of awareness and absence of integrated supply chains, the Indian logistics and supply chain sector has many hurdles to overcome. Listed here are five crucial areas where tech adoption can help overcome these challenges and rise up to meet the demands of these trying times:

**Optimising supply chain:** Like all activities, planning and forecasting demand, plays a vital role in optimising supply chains. By leveraging data analytics, blockchain, and AI, one can forecast demands and plan for consolidation of shipments based on special transit infrastructure requirements, location and urgency. Additionally, this data can also be used for route optimisation, to ensure the fastest and most cost-effective route can be undertaken for the shipment.

**Enhance storage facilities:** Warehouse management, especially cold storage, has been of vital significance in the case of food and medical supply chains. An integrated warehouse automation system, that utilises the best of AI, robotics and IoT-

enabled devices, can help monitor the accurate temperature controlled storage environment, drive energy optimisation and enable workers to keep stock, log arrival and departure of shipments, predict and report any probable damage and help keep the warehouse efficiently functioning, 24x7, with little human interference.

**Streamline operations:** Effective use of technology and digitisation of operations can help to not only cut down on time and labour but also help drive proactive consumer engagement, build trust and drive productivity. By leveraging blockchain, data analytics and IoT, one can digitise the documentation process, like e-bill, custom clearance etc., which otherwise can be a time-consuming process, on ground. Apart from documentation, invoices and payments, customer updates, tracking etc., can all be facilitated through an app/ a web based dashboard, where the client can have complete access to their past and current shipments, can place orders for their next shipment and keep abreast of the real time news and updates that may impact their transport/ logistic needs, especially during the times of a pandemic and partial lockdown.





**Effective transport:** With the advent of AI/ robotics and tech advancements in automotive engineering, self-driving vehicles or driverless vehicles are now a reality which can be used effectively for enhancing the efficacy of last-mile deliveries, given the lack of human resource during the pandemic. Not only are these safer but also efficient and can reduce the turnaround time drastically. Apart from this, IoT-enabled vehicles can help in real time tracking and monitoring of not only the vehicle but also the content – details like temperature control, effective handling and accurate stock keeping can all be handled through IoT related tech applications, ensuring that the vital medical supplies are delivered in a proper condition, without damage, and in time.

**Integrated supply chains:** Given the massive surge in the need for medical supplies, there is a lot of help that is pouring in from across the country as well as from different countries around the world. With such an extended supply chain, the shipments are set to change hands at multiple locations before actually reaching their destination. Leveraging big data and blockchain, it is now possible to monitor, streamline, and build an efficient and integrated supply chain that is well regulated, throughout its journey. Leveraging blockchain can help create a transparency and ensure that all the mandatory standards for transportation of medical supplies are adequately followed, at each step of the journey.

The blockchain-enabled virtual ledger helps keep tabs on the movement of

the shipment at every node across the network, registering its condition and handling, making it easy to spot, report and rectify any mishandling or delay. Even as we work together as a country to tide over this crisis, there are several vulnerabilities that have come to light and that need to be assessed, once the crisis is over. From flaws and drawbacks in the current system – across logistics, healthcare, governance and the ICT sector, to the unexplored possibility of rapid digitisation to fix some of these problems, the focus now, for the logistics and supply chain sector, should be to build a more agile and robust infrastructure, that is organised, green, and ready to support the business ecosystem of a nation that is set to sore high as a world economic superpower. 🇮🇳

🇮🇳 **Leveraging big data and blockchain, it is now possible to monitor, streamline, and build an efficient and integrated supply chain that is well regulated, throughout its journey** 🇮🇳

### DIGITALISATION

➔ Effective use of technology and digitisation of operations can help to not only cut down on time and labour but also help drive proactive consumer engagement, build trust and drive productivity.

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# A truly visible supply

With data and technology being termed as the 'new oil' in the present pandemic times, efforts are being made to make the supply chain management more visible by staying more positive, agile and fool-proof. **CARGOTALK**'s digital conclave discussed at length how adopting latest technologies and creating a data bank will make the supply chain industry more visible in the times to come.



Priyanshi Bana

**T**he unforeseen scenarios created by the pandemic has pushed the supply chain and warehousing industries to go full blow for digitalisation. Focussing on the complexities involved in the supply chain sector, **CARGOTALK** organised a virtual conference discussing the various factors in making the supply chain more visible by enabling it with latest technologies. The session was led by **V. Raju**, Senior Vice President CL – Chemical, Pharma & Food Sector, Avvashya CCI Logistics (Allcargo Group); **Samit Datta**, Head – Global



## DIGITAL CONCLAVE

Supply Chain, IT, Digital Transformation & Operational Excellence, Piramal Glass; and **Huseni Vohra**, Director – Business Development, APAC, project 44.

### LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PANDEMIC

With the unexpected dangerous second surge of the pandemic, many

lessons have been learnt in order to sail through these worst times. To keep the supply chain moving in a more efficient way, V. Raju said, "The pandemic in all its mighty role has once again hit the businesses and all of us. We thought it to be all over last year. With the second wave, it has totally re-engineered the supply

### SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

- The new supply chain management will be more positive, agile, resilient and will involve quick decision-making.
- The need of the hour to equip the supply chain with much more intelligence and create a support system which will help in faster decision making.





# chain

chain management with more focus on e-commerce and retail chain. The meaning of supply chain management has also changed to a great extent. The new supply chain management will be more positive, agile, resilient and will involve quick decision-making. These will be the new hallmarks of the supply chain in the new normal."

Explaining further, Datta stressed on the 4 R's which need to be kept in mind for smooth functioning of the supply chain. He said, "The pandemic has been a great revelation in many ways. There are 4 R's which should be followed rigorously:

- 'Responsibility' for everything we do including human safety and in terms of supply chain.
- 'Responsive', to create something which is both responsive and resilient.
- 'Reliable', the utmost important is the

ability to prove ourselves to be reliable to our customers or stakeholders

- 'Relationships', should be built more cohesive and able to grow further.

These 4 R's would play a significant role in the coming times."

## RE-ENGINEERING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Pointing towards the need to re-engineer the supply chain, Vohra said, "With the pandemic, re-engineering is not limited in the professional world, it is now applicable in all the spheres. We have adapted well in the new normal. The pandemic has had a massive impact on all of us including the trade and global economy. Supply chain has always been a critical function; the pandemic has only magnified the importance of the supply chain in the entire eco system. Thus, the supply chain needs to be more resilient, agile and fool-proof. Technology providers are doing a lot to support the supply chain and offer complete visibility end-to-end.

During a complete lockdown, like many essential services, the supply chain never stopped, supplying the medical essentials, hygiene and cleaning products, food essentials etc., in spite of the huge pressure building on the industry. This pressure was not only from the outside but from within, such as the capacity issues, the demand-supply equations were very dynamic. To top it, the quarantine rules and frequent accidents happening around just added to the problems.

With that said, there is always more room to make supply chain even better. This can be achieved by taking the help of technology adoption on many fronts, visibility being one of them. It is the need of the hour to equip the supply chain with much more intelligence and create a support system which will help in faster decision making. Being an industry leader, many other technology suppliers including project 44 are leading to help the supply chain industry as a whole."



**V. Raju**

Senior Vice President CL – Chemical, Pharma & Food Sector,  
Awashya CCI Logistics (Allcargo Group)

**🔥 The importance of the regional supply chain is here to stay for some time now. Pandemic or no pandemic, regionalisation will be prevalent till the system reassembles, factories start working and the global supplies return to normal 🔥**

## FROM GLOBALISATION TO REGIONALISATION

Explaining the many reasons behind the paradigm shift in the supply chain industry, V. Raju said, "The pandemic has certainly changed the thinking process of the corporates or the customers. The trend is gradually changing from globalisation to regionalisation. Earlier, the stress was on cheap labour, availability of the volumes, better quality and a quicker output because of the surety that the factories, the production centres across the world are running, and the freight costs are cheap and the ships will be available all the time. But the pandemic has changed it all. Today the corporates or an MNC have to take some quick decisions due to uncertainty in the sailing schedules which have taken a hit due to capacity issues, unavailability of the ships all the time due to the pandemic which has hit everyone alike globally. Unavailability of the workforce, goods not reaching on time are some of the key factors which have led to the shift from globalisation

### A PARADIGM SHIFT

- ➔ The trend is gradually changing from globalisation to regionalisation.
- ➔ Unavailability of the workforce, goods not reaching on time are some of the key factors which have led to the shift from globalisation to regionalisation.



**Samit Datta**

*Head – Global Supply Chain, IT, Digital Transformation & Operational Excellence, Piramal Glass*

**🔥 The real differentiator is going to be data and technology. If we want to survive, we have to adopt it and adapt to it, leaving us with no choice in order to avoid becoming history 🔥**

to regionalisation. Gone are the days when one thought about cheaper goods, voluminous output etc. We now need to work in an environment close to the factories so that the transportation

and travelling schedules do not hit the supply chain and the goods are available well in time.

Similarly, warehousing sector needs to rework upon their locations. The supply chain therefore needs to be more positive, more alert to the changing realms happening around the world. With quick decisions, they should be ready to make heavy investments if required in order to keep the production running. The thinking has totally changed today.

The importance of the regional supply chain is here to stay for some time now. Pandemic or no pandemic, regionalisation will be prevalent till the system reassembles, factories start working and the global supplies return to normal. Till such time, which may even take a few years for the situation to return to a global normal, there will be regional dependency on the supply chain. Thus, regional will be the new norm at least for now."

### ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Vouching strongly for the immense role technology has played in these tough times, Datta added, "Technology

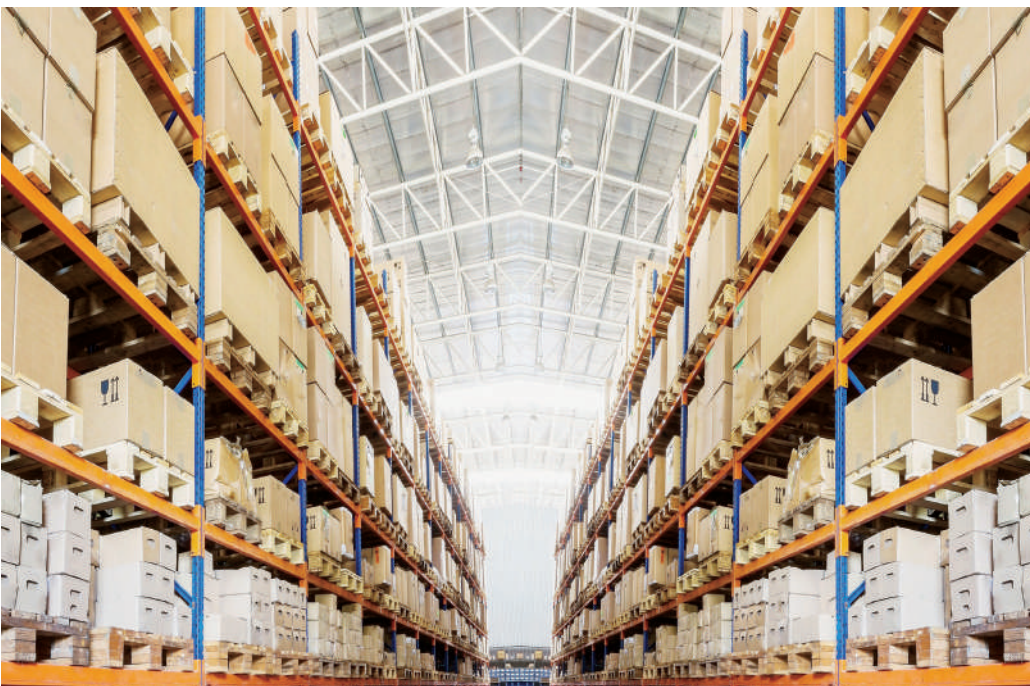
has taken a front seat. In context to India, technology was considered a cost, questioning about the Return on Investments (ROI). However, leading companies have always invested regularly in technology which not only has tangible but also a lot of intangible benefits to it. Tracking the data is the important thing today. Along with this there are a few other elements attached to it such as real time visibility, which will help in taking real-time decisions. Most important is how this data can be used to create some analytics model which can help to predict or prescribe. Therefore, the role played by technology in future will be very high.

Not only this, technology also helps in creating a repository, in terms of knowledge and history. For example, documentation, which is a big aspect in the world of exports and imports, at times can be a big problem if any one document is missing. But once these documents are loaded in a repository which is Cloud-enabled, it becomes convenient for everyone.

Secondly, with this pandemic, a lot of government regulatory bodies have now shifted to electronic data rather than physical documentation, meaning that the world has speeded up and technology has been at the bottom of this change, playing a significant role. Going forward, with more usage of technology, we can use the data to enable us to be more reliable and faster than others.

The real differentiator is going to be data and technology. If we want to survive, we have to adopt it and adapt to it, leaving us with no choice in order to avoid becoming history."

Explaining further the need of technology, V. Raju said, "Warehouses should be more technology-friendly with Cloud computing, analytics etc. With Warehouse Management System (WMS) software in place, finding out the exact location of the cargo can





help to plan our receipts, delivery and inventory management in time and also the remotely controlled operator driven Material Handling Equipments (MHEs) and automatic storage and retrieval systems. These technologies are of great help even during the pandemic times to plan in advance."

### LAST-MILE DELIVERY

Emphasising on the importance last-mile distribution has acquired in the supply chain management, V. Raju added, "This has become extremely important especially with e-commerce or the online order placement. There is huge change in the behaviour of the customer as far as the placing of orders is concerned today. Since the orders placed are online, everyone expects a fast delivery within a stipulated time. With the pandemic a lot of orders pile up, as a result supply is unable to keep up the pace. A well-developed Traffic Management System (TMS) can help plan a route optimisation model. Supplying the order through the fastest route available will prove to be a boon. Secondly, contactless and a paperless delivery is a must in saving us from this pandemic."

### TRUE VISIBILITY: NEED OF THE HOUR

Emphasising on the need of true visibility in the supply chain management, Vohra said, "Making the actionable and meaningful data available to the right people in the organisation at the right time is definitely a key.

Once such data and intelligence is available, it should be put to practice in analysing whether one has become more reliable and resilient in their networks based on the data available and is able to bring down its penalties and cost. Another important aspect is to be able to delight their customers with reduced lead time.

As a technology provider, we are trying to help in reducing the detention cost, trying to improve the lead time, trying to trigger the negotiations with the carriers and logistics service providers about the efficiencies and inefficiencies in the trade networks. True visibility is not only about making the data and intelligence available but putting them to practice and using them."



**Huseni Vohra**  
Director – Business Development  
APAC, project 44

🔥 **Supply chain has always been a critical function; the pandemic has only magnified the importance of the supply chain in the entire eco system. Thus, the supply chain needs to be more resilient, agile and fool-proof** 🔥

### CONGESTION, DETENTION, DEMURRAGE

Continuing with the role of technology in overcoming such issues, Datta added, "Visibility and technology can help a lot in dealing with such issues. Without them one would land up incurring huge losses. Customising the solutions according to a customer's requirements with the help of technology will reduce a lot of losses. As far as visibility and working with project 44 is concerned, they have a good triangulation method by which the data is qualified. One important aspect is transshipment, which has often been overlooked.

By virtue of visibility, it is helping a customer in reducing his expenses by keeping track of his vessels. It is helping the customer in a responsible way, enabling them to become confident about one's supply chain. Technology therefore once again plays a big fundamental role in containing the issues of congestion or demurrage etc." 🔥



### TECH-FRIENDLY

➔ Warehouses should be more technology-friendly with Cloud computing, analytics etc. With Warehouse Management System (WMS) software in place, finding out the exact location of the cargo can help to plan our receipts, delivery and inventory management in time and also the remotely controlled operator driven Material Handling Equipments (MHEs) and automatic storage and retrieval systems.

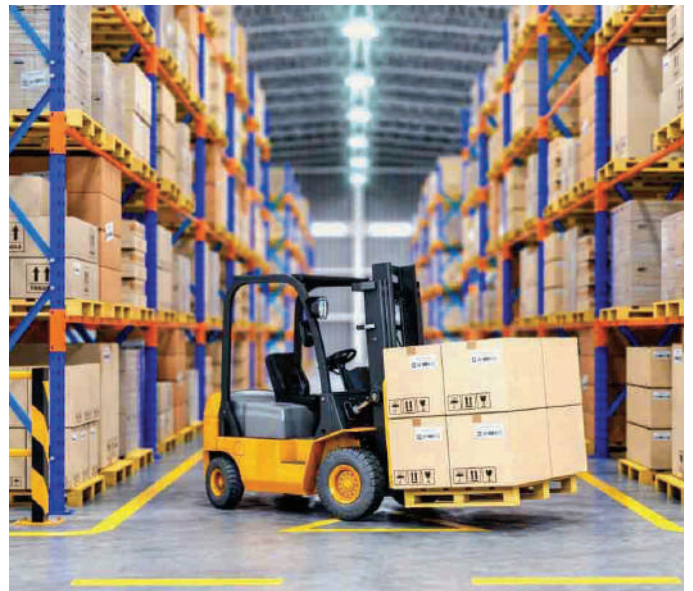
# Warehouses moving to greener pastures

Dealing with the pandemic crisis and a few policy reform initiatives, Tier-II & III cities have emerged as the preferred choices to shift base to for many key warehouse and logistics companies. Stalwarts in the logistics industry dwell on the current scenario.



Priyanshi Bana

**F**rom dilapidated buildings called 'godowns', to modern 'warehouses', the industry has come a long way. It has now become the backbone of the manufacturing and ever evolving e-commerce industry. The sector is evolving rapidly, with businesses and



**Balvinder Singh**  
Co-founder  
Mex Storage Systems

**More and more companies that earlier concentrated in Tier-I cities are now shifting to Tier-II & III cities. It has helped companies ensure effective order fulfilment within a stipulated time frame**



**Gaurav Agrawal**  
Director  
R Logistics Park, Raipur

**We have seen a sharp increase in demand in Tier-II & III cities like Raipur. With GST completing four years in India, companies have now aligned their logistics roadmap and warehouses are now coming up in new and strategic locations**

technology driving it, and is undergoing dynamic changes. With changes in the policies and infrastructural challenges, the warehousing industry is emerging as a pillar of strength to support the Indian economy.

According to a recent JLL report, warehousing demand is expected to grow around 160% to reach 35 million sq. ft. in 2021, making India a global manufacturing hub, which has led to warehousing clusters expanding rapidly beyond Tier-I cities and tapping on the potential of Tier-II and III cities. The change in the global supply chains has made firms re-invent their expansion strategies, focussing on providing efficient last-mile deliveries.

With increasing demand and manufacturing, the Tier-II and III cities such as Ludhiana, Ambala, Lucknow, Patna, Siliguri, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Coimbatore, Kochi, Nagpur, Indore, Jaipur and Dholera, are fast emerging as Grade A warehousing clusters. Some of these cities have witnessed 20% growth in warehousing in FY2020, as indicated in a Knight Frank report. Obviously, there are advantages in terms of low rentals, availability of cheaper manpower, low capitalisation and others which are driving the growth in these non-Tier I cities.

Explaining the paradigm shift to these smaller towns, **Balvinder Singh**,



Co-founder, Mex Storage Systems says, "Undoubtedly, the warehousing sector has come a long way and gained significant prominence over the past few years in terms of size and scope. With the change in time and continuous technological advancement, it has also become an indispensable part of the logistics network. If we talk about Tier-II & III cities, they indeed have a significant role in the warehousing sector, as it has helped companies meet their daily online orders and provide fast and safe delivery to different corners at cheaper rates than Tier-I cities.

Warehousing sector has absolutely evolved over the last year and especially after this COVID crisis, companies have understood the need for expanding their logistic facilities beyond Tier-I cities. The ongoing pandemic, lockdown restrictions, urbanisation and many other reasons have led companies to reform their supplying strategies for ensuring continuous supplying of orders and maintaining customers' faith. More and more companies that earlier concentrated in Tier-I cities are now shifting to Tier-II & III cities. It has helped companies ensure effective order fulfilment within a stipulated time frame.

The shift has been made after certain policy initiatives, and it has some obvious advantages like low rental, low investment, and cheap labour etc. Besides being beneficial for the companies, it will also facilitate an improved distribution of wealth and growth in the rural sector."

According to **Gaurav Agrawal**, Director, R Logistics Park, Raipur, "Warehousing sector has been growing tremendously over the last few years. We have seen a sharp increase in demand in Tier-II & III cities like Raipur. With GST completing four years in India, companies have now aligned their logistics roadmap and warehouses are now coming up in new and strategic locations."

Another important factor which has led to the rise in demand of these Tier-II & III city warehouses is the exponential rise of the e-commerce and e-retail industries. **Naveen Rawat**, Director & Co-founder, Holisol Logistics says, "The outbreak of COVID-19 has led to the growth of e-commerce in the country, especially in Tier-II & Tier-III cities. Due to the lockdown and prevailing situation, more and more people are finding it safe and convenient to shop online instead of stepping out. This has driven the e-commerce players to scale up their presence in smaller cities to be able to serve the end consumer and increase their customer base. With rising demand, more and more brands especially those who are catering to essential products are expected to increase their inventory levels in Tier-II and Tier-III consumption markets. We are observing the rising need for 'A' Class facilities equipped with technology to provide seamless services to the customer."

Adding to the cost involved, **Sushant Nigam**, International Air Cargo & AEO Consultant says, "Warehousing has much lower cost in the Tier-II & III cities and it connects the local and the small-time manufacturers with the distributors and retailers in a better way, benefitting all for speed, cost-effectiveness and the business profits."

Explaining the contribution of the e-commerce industry, Singh adds, "The COVID outbreak has made a dramatic change in the e-commerce industry. E-commerce companies have seen a great rise in the orders from Tier-II & III cities than in Tier-I. However, with all the lockdown restrictions and ensuring safety, it is hard to provide timely supply, especially to the remotest part of the country. If a warehouse gets set up in more than one location, it becomes easier to fulfil the orders within the meantime. Setting up warehouses in Tier-II & III cities may help you reach more audience, provide



**Naveen Rawat**  
Director & Co-founder  
Holisol Logistics

✦ **The outbreak of COVID-19 has led to the growth of e-commerce, especially in Tier-II & Tier-III cities. Due to the prevailing situation, more and more people are finding it safe & convenient to shop online** ✦

timely delivery and ensure e-commerce order fulfilment. Warehousing industry can help in management of supply and meet demand within a promised time frame, allow companies handle alteration, return orders and timely processing and ensure better order management efficiency."

Pointing to the changed dynamics of online shopping, Agrawal further adds, "One good thing to come out of this pandemic is a lot of people who were still not online have now come online. More and more people from smaller places are now placing orders online for stuff like groceries, FMCG etc. All this has been possible thanks to the superb supply chain management by the e-commerce companies. We are Raipur's landlords to at least 8-10 of the leading e-commerce companies in India and seeing their working we can safely say that they will not stop until they reach the remotest pin code. These companies rely heavily on good warehouses which



**Sushant Nigam**  
International Air Cargo &  
AEO Consultant

✦ **Warehousing has much lower cost in the Tier-II & III cities and it connects the local and the small-time manufacturers with the distributors and retailers in a better way, benefitting all for speed, cost-effectiveness and the business profits** ✦

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IS CHANGING

➤ There has been a tremendous shift in consumer behaviour as the majority of customers across the country – even those in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, have resorted to online shopping. Customers today need to have access to their required products within the shortest period of time.



**Alexandre Amine Soufiani**  
Managing Director  
FM Logistics

🔥 Companies have understood the importance of investing in Grade-A warehousing facilities in smaller cities. This has helped them to cater to the rapidly increasing customer base in these cities 🔥



**Sandeep Chadha**  
Managing Director  
Pragati Warehouser

🔥 While the key eight metros are being saturated and there is an inundated demand for more warehousing centres it is but natural to look up to India's upcoming centres to balance it out 🔥



**Anshul Singhal**  
Managing Director  
Welspun One Logistics

🔥 With a surge in online shopping in Tier-II & III cities because of easy accessibility to internet, there has been a sharp increase in buying power and a rise in general awareness 🔥

are built in strategic locations. So warehousing is very important for their growth in Tier-II & III cities."

Explaining the benefits of setting up Grade-A warehouses in these cities, **Alexandre Amine Soufiani**, Managing Director, FM Logistics says, "As e-commerce marketplaces chase every serviceable pin code in the country, warehouses are being developed beyond the outskirts of major cities. For a long time, companies

used to focus on land located outside the top few cities in order to store inventory and transport them easily to key consumption centres. Today, this is changing. With growing consumption in Tier-II and III cities and the launch of online-only brands, the demand across these cities has gone up significantly.

During the ongoing pandemic, delivering essential services to the masses became a necessity, which has resulted in a significant growth in the Tier-II and Tier-III warehousing markets. Though these markets are still at a nascent stage, they have huge growth potential. There has been a tremendous shift in consumer behaviour as the majority of customers across the country – even those in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, have resorted to online shopping. Customers today need to have access to their required products within the shortest period of time. In order to deal with such situations, companies have understood the importance

of having a real-time pulse of the market and are investing in Grade-A warehousing facilities in smaller cities. This has helped them to cater to the rapidly increasing customer base in these cities."

Further, expounding on the benefits, **Sandeep Chadha**, Managing Director, Pragati Warehouser said, "While the key eight metros are being saturated and there is an inundated demand for more warehousing centres it is but natural to look up to India's upcoming centres to balance it out. The advantage would be quick turnaround time, lesser costs and a synchronised overall realm. Redundancy will be removed, and overall throughput shall be enhanced. With too many centres being the need of the hour, streaming it all could be a challenge. But then we have technology to our rescue, and we can overcome the bottleneck with the help of it. Automation, robotics, AI, machine learning and IoT are all being implemented to smooth it out. So I would say, there are more upsides than the hurdles in executing it on an industrial level and on a pan-India basis."

According to **Anshul Singhal**, Managing Director, Welspun One Logistics, "With a surge in online shopping in Tier-II & III cities because of easy accessibility to internet, there has been a sharp increase in buying power and a rise in general awareness. With this, the demand across India for consumption through online buying has gone up significantly, hence giving rise to a demand for warehousing. As the demand for Grade-A warehousing is expected to increase consistently, further incentives towards private and institutional investment in warehousing and logistics parks through tax benefits, streamlined compliance and strengthening last-mile connectivity via support infrastructure like roadways, inter-state transport, and factory-to-port facilities, will greatly benefit the sector's growth." 🔥

## FACTFILE

➔ Warehousing demand is expected to grow around 160% to reach 35 million sq. ft. in 2021, making India a global manufacturing hub.





# Sailing through rough weather

Despite the unforeseen challenges and hurdles being thrown in by the pandemic, the cargo industry has stood firm serving the nation in a 'never say die' attitude. **Vijay Kumar**, President, FFFAI, talks about the industry holding its ground hard.

 Priyanshi Bana

## What has been the biggest learning for the cargo industry since 2020?

The 'never say die' attitude of the cargo industry once again stood reconfirmed in 2020. The wheels of the supply chain never came to a halt and despite all the challenges the world of cargo delivered, they continue to remain buoyant and vigilant to ensure commerce across the nation and across the globe moves forward.

## How do you think it can evolve further in making the cargo industry function with even more precision?

WFH (work from home) has assumed far greater sophistication with the help of technology. Contactless transactions are growing at an astounding pace. Looking forward even though cargo forwarding is a very physical activity, the pre- and post-dispatch procedures and process will become enabled and the dependence on a physical office space to transact work will diminish rapidly. This paradigm shift will also open up opportunities for embracing AI and other cutting-edge technologies to remain relevant in the business.

## What all areas do you think governmental agencies will be of help in the smoother and efficient functioning of the cargo industry?

The role of the government will be

critical for this new world order to operate in a legal framework that stands amended, casting aside the rules based on paper, and recognising the paperless records and processes. A very quick review of the various laws needs to be undertaken proactively and the relevant changes notified that also take care of the future developments.


## Could you shed some light on the new initiatives, problems faced in present circumstances?

Our personnel have adopted to the WFH module very efficiently and seamlessly thanks to the encouragement and guidance offered by the industry associations. It has thrown up a few challenges like lack of a social bonding found in offices, the emotional disconnect between subordinates, claustrophobia etc. Constant dialogues both at a one-to-one level and at a collective group level has been a great tool to surmount these new challenges and we have become much more employee focused in helping them to understand and accept this new work environment and yet not lose the old values of bonding and identity.

## What more do you think can be done to improve the parameters such as security, time management and the most important 'last-mile connectivity'?

Any emergency, and in this case, a global emergency will highlight some

defaults. COVID relief transportation did present its own set of challenges. International transportation required regulatory compliance by way of taxes and duties and compliance with other national standards. Even though the GOI acted rapidly to announce dispensations to ensure that there is no hold up, the lack of sync between customs duties and IGST has been a sore thumb. Many believed that imports were offered relief of all duties but only to be later grimly reminded that this waiver did not cover the IGST. Also, onerous conditions to be fulfilled for availing IGST waiver could have been simplified. Compliance with standards requirements or notification benefit conditions was one major cause of some hold ups.

Cool chain transportation was achieved but rather in an ad hoc fashion and not in a methodical well described and documented manner. The lack of physical infrastructure to receive/store and distribute at the final stages was another issue but it was also addressed by individual initiatives rather than a well-established emergency protocol. But then the nation has risen up and faced these challenges undaunted and there are many unsung heroes who need to be complimented for their exemplary efforts during these trying times. Humanity learns from every situation and this is one huge learning process. 



**Vijay Kumar**  
President  
FFFAI

 **The wheels of the supply chain never came to a halt and despite all the challenges the world of cargo delivered, they continue to remain buoyant and vigilant to ensure commerce across the globe moves forward** 

## TRANSPORTATION

 International transportation required regulatory compliance by way of taxes and duties and compliance with other national standards.

# Exports: Tiding on a high

With pharma and agro sectors already doing exceptionally well, labour-intensive industries such as handicrafts, leather goods, garments etc. are following closely in its contribution to exports. **Sharad Kumar Saraf**, President, FIEO speaks on the comfortable position of exports in 2021.



Priyanshi Bana

**Q** *With such a positive start this month, can we expect exports to return to pre-COVID levels for the full year? What is the order booking position for 2021?*

For 2021, the order booking position is quite comfortable. Orders required by the exporters are well in place and the overall situation is quite good since our agriculture is doing great. We have excellent agro production and agro exports which will only go up. Another point helping us is that due to the slump in domestic demand, the export capacity is in a comfortable position. Most important is that the prices of all the raw materials have gone up, the cost of freight has risen, so in terms of valuation, it is on the rise. Thus, there are enough reasons to say that exports should do well in the coming year comparatively.

**Q** *Will the state-wise lockdowns impact the growth trajectory? What is the solution to this?*

It gives me immense pleasure to share that most of the states have exempted the exports production houses and all other services required by the exporters from the lockdown. For example, states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and others, have exempted the export units, big or small, and their offices are allowed to work without any disruption. Regarding the support from

the government, for the first time we are seeing a very helpful and considerate approach by allowing the exporters to operate even during the lockdown. Once the present lockdowns begin to loosen up, I see things improving. Also, there has been a lot of learning from the pandemic such as the factories have learnt to follow the COVID protocols of social distancing and maintaining hygiene standards.

**Q** *Beyond medical exports, which other industries do you feel will do well this year? Are medical exports a short-term growth or will this have a long-term impact as well?*

Medical growth is not short-term, since there is a brand loyalty attached as far as the medical usage is concerned. Wherever our medical exporters have dug in, they are going to retain their customers. So I see no reason for the shortfall in terms of exports, rather I feel it is sustainable as far as this sector is concerned. Another sector close to pharma is the agro sector in terms of growth. In agro sector alone there are commodities such as pulses, rice, wheat etc. apart from fruits and vegetables for which the exports are already taking place.

Apart from agro and pharma, labour-intensive sectors like handicrafts,

leather goods and garments will also do quite well since their hands are full on orders. The only sector which has some challenges is engineering where the price of steel has gone above the roof and is creating problems in competition with other countries. Therefore, it is unable to register the growth like other sectors. By and large we are in a strong position.

**Q** *A lot of airlines have doubled the air cargo fleet and are offering quick solutions. What is your take on this trend?*

There is a phenomenal rise in demand for goods to reach fast, especially in the pharma sector. With perishable items, airlines have increased their cargo fleet. At the same time the logistics sector has become very efficient, offering some very innovative services and solutions. Apart from increasing the air cargo, the shipping and surface transport are doing equally well.

The only hurdle faced is the container problem. My suggestion would be to be self-sufficient to have container manufacturing in the country under Atmanirbhar Bharat. Secondly, we need to have our own Indian flag vessel. It is sad that we do not have that. We are remitting all the freight abroad which is a big drain on our foreign currency.



**Sharad Kumar Saraf**  
President  
FIEO

**Orders required by the exporters are well in place and the overall situation is quite good since our agriculture is doing great. We have excellent agro production and agro exports which will only go up**





### *Should exporters explore new markets? Will the traditional markets continue to grow?*

Traditional markets will continue to grow. As far as the new markets are concerned, there are hardly any left. Countries like Japan where our penetration is quite low and others like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan are still out of our reach due to a pending freight corridor which was to come up through Iran. Apart from this our exporters are well connected to maximum countries.

### *Is there a change in the customer behaviour under the new normal, what has influenced this change?*

Yes, there is certainly a new normal behaviour. Earlier, a customer would insist a lot on the visits or physical interactions, which no longer persist. The customers are now able to take decisions much faster as compared to early times. Also, it is a result of our reputation as a stable supplier which has gone up. We are now a preferred source rather than a secondary source. There is also an anti-China sentiment which is prevalent even now due to which we have seen an increase in enquiries from Europe and US in particular.

### *What is your take on last-mile connectivity in the country currently?*

There is nothing in particular which is holding us back. One thing I would like to point out is the clarity on RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) rate. In these times, profits have disappeared completely. The exporters are exporting with scrapings on their profitability. We are running exports just to keep the wheel moving. That cannot last long. If we want sustainable exports, then RoDTEP rates would have to be declared without any further delay.

### *How do you recommend accelerating the digital transformation in the export sector?*

Digital transformation is the most happening thing today. It is happening out of necessity since the exporters are also working from home. At FIEO, we have created digital trade fairs which used to be physical events earlier.

It is so convenient watching the same from home. Similarly, we are working on our export-import documentation to become fully digital, leaving few areas which need to be addressed. Offices

of Customs and DGFT are almost fully digital. A digital revolution is taking place out of necessity.

### *What best practices have exporters adopted and what can other industries learn from them?*

The most important practice our exporters have adopted is COVID compliance. Second is technology upgradation. The exporters have realised that technology upgradation is the key to improve productivity and quality. With that said, it is a surprise to see that exporters have been able to produce the same quantity with 25% less workforce who have either migrated or is unable to come to work for unknown reasons.

From my experience, I can say that earlier our industry shied away from spending on technology, but I can say with full confidence, 'money spent on technology earns much more returns than anything else'. By technology, I mean both digital and on the production front since we now have very sophisticated tools and a lot of automation happening which the industry needs to adopt. Our exporters are showing keen interest on this. 🇮🇳

## BEST PRACTICES

➔ The most important practice our exporters have adopted is COVID compliance. Second is technology upgradation. The exporters have realised that technology upgradation is the key to improve productivity and quality. With that said, it is a surprise to see that exporters have been able to produce the same quantity with 25% less workforce

# Quick estimates for selected major commodities for April 2021

## Trade: Export

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Crores		% Change APR'21
		APR'20	APR'21	
1	Tea	153.94	370.38	140.60
2	Coffee	311.31	532.19	70.95
3	Rice	4177.48	6596.09	57.90
4	Other cereals	76.70	413.10	438.59
5	Tobacco	193.57	543.42	180.74
6	Spices	1537.78	2967.75	92.99
7	Cashew	105.14	370.20	252.10
8	Oil Meals	240.44	891.37	270.72
9	Oil seeds	273.05	717.69	162.84
10	Fruits & Vegetables	1549.85	1898.55	22.50
11	Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items	457.01	1226.01	168.27
12	Marine Products	2016.12	4095.38	103.13
13	Meat, dairy & poultry products	1058.09	2571.64	143.05
14	Iron Ore	1778.03	4727.09	165.86
15	Mica, Coal & Other Ores, Minerals including processed minerals	859.34	2864.27	233.31
16	Leather & leather products	169.64	2156.50	1171.22
17	Ceramic products & glassware	398.29	2118.14	431.81
18	Gems & Jewellery	274.90	25166.07	9054.63
19	Drugs & Pharmaceuticals	11672.27	14073.80	20.57
20	Organic & Inorganic Chemicals	9136.18	15042.01	64.64
21	Engineering Goods	17949.87	59313.12	230.44
22	Electronic Goods	1578.51	7287.50	361.67
23	Cotton Yarn/Fabs./made-ups, Handloom Products etc.	1129.15	7922.53	601.64
24	Man-made Yarn/Fabs./made-ups etc.	470.83	3159.83	571.12
25	RMG of all Textiles	962.92	9661.36	903.34
26	Jute Mfg. including Floor Covering	15.85	276.44	1644.10
27	Carpet	68.18	967.20	1318.60
28	Handicrafts excl. handmade carpet	87.93	1181.05	1243.17
29	Petroleum Products	9472.57	26976.37	184.78
30	Plastic & Linoleum	3647.70	5412.18	48.37
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>71822.64</b>	<b>211499.23</b>	<b>194.47</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>78951.41</b>	<b>228071.76</b>	<b>188.88</b>

Note 1: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other'.

Note 2: The figures for APR'21 are provisional.

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India)



# Quick estimates for selected major commodities for April 2021

## Trade: Import

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Crores		% Change APR'21
		APR'20	APR'21	
1	Cotton Raw & Waste	226.37	248.04	9.57
2	Vegetable Oil	4947.75	9588.56	93.80
3	Pulses	725.53	411.23	-43.32
4	Fruits & vegetables	969.67	1611.28	66.17
5	Pulp and Waste paper	486.64	696.65	43.16
6	Textile yarn Fabric, made-up articles	521.56	1086.38	108.29
7	Fertilisers, Crude & manufactured	2664.61	2807.19	5.35
8	Sulphur & Unroasted Iron Pyrites	8.71	138.37	1488.63
9	Metaliferrous ores & other minerals	2015.66	4703.43	133.34
10	Coal, Coke & Briquettes, etc.	9110.87	14820.70	62.67
11	Petroleum, Crude & products	35537.22	80968.76	127.84
12	Wood & Wood products	1913.74	3762.35	96.60
13	Leather & leather products	212.77	399.06	87.55
14	Organic & Inorganic Chemicals	9889.74	16700.62	68.87
15	Dyeing/tanning/colouring materials	1180.13	2171.76	84.03
16	Artificial resins, plastic materials, etc.	5684.63	13253.62	133.15
17	Chemical material & products	3673.03	6637.87	80.72
18	Newsprint	327.33	172.54	-47.29
19	Pearls, precious & Semi-precious stones	15.71	18400.05	117023.17
20	Iron & Steel	5200.34	8804.40	69.30
21	Non-ferrous metals	3411.10	9805.95	187.47
22	Machine tools	1197.96	2349.57	96.13
23	Machinery, electrical & non-electrical	10844.39	22760.45	109.88
24	Transport equipment	4092.11	10863.53	165.48
25	Project goods	410.29	769.29	87.50
26	Professional instrument, Optical goods, etc.	1364.05	3365.06	146.70
27	Electronic goods	12277.26	37682.97	206.93
28	Medicinal & Pharmaceutical products	3309.45	5011.71	51.44
29	Gold	21.61	46462.75	214905.78
30	Silver	790.95	88.60	-88.80
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>123031.18</b>	<b>326542.74</b>	<b>165.41</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>130525.08</b>	<b>340505.06</b>	<b>160.87</b>

Note 1: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other'.

Note 2: The figures for APR'21 are provisional.

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India)

# Creating footprints with precision

Taking forward the legacy with 'quality' and 'precision', Avigna Group is fast spreading its wings in the warehousing and logistics sector. **Abhijit Verma**, Executive Director & CEO of the Avigna Group shares his vision and plans.



Priyanshi Bana

 *Kindly elaborate on the Avigna Group.*

We are a third generation into the business, starting mainly with textiles. Today we are a very prominent textile player in the market. Of late, we have ventured into education, real estate and the latest being warehousing and logistics. Being a family business, our main focus lies on 'quality' and 'precision'. And this value system has stayed ever since, from the first shirt manufactured by us to the 1 million sq. ft. industrial space we have just delivered. Maintaining this value system, we have grown by investing in land, in people and in culture. Holding more than 2,000 acres of land across South India, the Group has grown by leaps and bounds.



**Abhijit Verma**  
Executive Director & CEO  
Avigna Group

 **Orders required by the exporters are well in place and the overall situation is quite good since our agriculture is doing great. We have excellent agro production and agro exports which will only go up** 

As mentioned about moving to infrastructure and logistics business, we have been witnessing India's growth for a long time. For any country to grow, the infrastructure system or the supply chain management plays a pivotal role in the growth of the country. We took the plunge in the year 2000 when the government was talking very clearly about the infrastructure and the supply chain in India.

Formally we entered this segment in 2015, when the GST was introduced, we invested in warehousing land in



Hoskote, Bangalore. By 2017, when GST came into practice, the sector had already grown manifold in terms of space and quality. Since there are already many big players in the market at regional and national levels, we needed to develop our capabilities which would help us grow with prominence. Since we were already in the land acquisition business for generations, it gave us an edge over others to understand well the nitty-gritty of investing in land.

To be a prominent player in this industry three points need to be kept in mind: One, to be future-ready with assets, because they are changing from a 'godown' to a Grade A facility. Second, in terms of services, the traditional supply chain is now changing to automated robotic systems. Third is the development of clients. Presently, we are focussing on Hosur, Hoskote and Chennai to begin with.

The pandemic has given a sudden importance to the supply chain. Globally, countries like India and Mexico have gained a lot of importance as compared to China. The way of doing business has changed in terms of technology, safety has become a new norm in terms of staff and the practices followed. Another paradigm shift has been to B2B, B2C, where e-commerce has taken a great importance now. We are now expanding towards Mumbai, Farruknagar, Sonapat, Jaipur and Patna. Cumulatively, this will provide us with a footprint of approximately 15-16 million sq. ft.

 *Can you throw some light on the investments in Southern and Central India respectively?*

These investments will mainly focus on agriculture warehousing in particular. We have already taken few initiatives in developing agriculture infrastructure. Starting



in South, we already have land in Chengalpet where we intend to develop a 10 million sq. ft. integrated Food Terminal Market with various storages. It is essential to focus on certain issues while addressing the problems faced by the farmers. One, the logistics, how his produce will reach to the market, second, the storage systems and the third important issue is the market.

If we are able to get the farmers to a world-class market where the logistics and storage issues are sorted, there will be a paradigm shift from MSP to MRP. Unfortunately, due to the elections in South and the second wave of the pandemic, the plans had to be deferred as of now.

Moving towards Central India, especially Madhya Pradesh offers a lot of opportunity because of the variety in produce. Unfortunately, the farmers of the state are at a very low level. Thus, backward integration is required in many aspects. Due to the plethora of opportunities available in the state, the magnitude of the project has risen three times. But the pandemic has forced us to put everything on hold.

### **What are the expansion plans, especially in regard to the Food Terminal Market?**

Since we are a South India-based company, we are expanding from Tamil Nadu. In Hosur, we are developing 3 billion sq. ft. of industrial and warehouse logistic terminal, in Chennai it will be 1 million sq. ft., and in Hoskote, Bangalore, we plan to develop 4 million sq. ft. Moving towards Madurai and Coimbatore, we are developing 2 million and 1 billion sq. ft respectively. In the West, we have already invested in Bhiwandi. In North India, we are looking at Farrukhnagar, Sonipat etc.

The reason behind the immense support from clients is due to the quality and precision we have been able to showcase in these difficult times.



Coming to the agriculture business, it has a lot of sentimental value attached to it. It is more of a sellers' market rather than a buyers' market. Farmers too expect to do business respectfully. Therefore, we are working on creating various collection centres at the grassroot level. From there, we will be building a primary processing centre which will in turn connect to these mega food terminal markets where customers, both, domestic and international will be present. For this, I am looking for the government support, where the railway yards, dry ports etc. can be provided to us.

### **According to you, what are challenges thrown by the pandemic and how do you plan to overcome them?**

The three things the pandemic has showcased are: First, tangible and intangible i.e. the gratitude, that anything can happen to anyone, thereby becoming better human beings. Second, persistence, that life has to go on and third, dependability. Pre-pandemic, we never realised how people working for us were of importance to us. During the pandemic, life came to a standstill with labour or other helping staff gone.

Our sites did not stop even for a day, other than the government lockdown orders. No labour has left us, we did not see any migration happening.

Another tangible aspect is that the way of doing business has changed, moving more towards robotics and technology taking a prominent role in this industry. Today we are talking about the AI, IoT, Cobots etc. Thus, technology has become very critical. Also, quick

decisions and better planning is in place due to a volatile situation. One has to be very agile and quick today. Turnaround time has changed with a new technology interface.

### **W**hat makes you stand out from among your competitors?

As mentioned earlier, my understanding regarding land is one of the very big USP as compared to others. Secondly, our preparation towards future-ready assets keeps us ahead of our competitors. Third, our longevity of Indian business perspective makes us different. Being in the business for more than 45 years, we understand the complexities and the advantages of the Indian business approach. Being exporters, we better understand that the element of quality and precision is of utmost importance. The minutest of fault, rejects our entire lot. Thus, our entire system is based on efficiency, quality and the deliveries which help us stand out among the competitors.

### **What is the new normal in the logistics industry?**

The interface of technology is a new change. From B2B to B2C, e-commerce has taken a very significant role, changing the entire perspective of the business. Today the goods are being delivered directly from the manufacturer to the consumer. Technology and B2C will take prominence in this new normal. 

## EXPANSION PLANS

 In Hosur, we are developing 3 billion sq. ft. of industrial and warehouse logistic terminal, in Chennai it will be 1 million sq. ft., and in Hoskote, Bangalore, we plan to develop 4 million sq. ft. Moving towards Madurai and Coimbatore, we are developing 2 million and 1 billion sq. ft respectively. In the West, we have already invested in Bhiwandi. In North India, we are looking at Farrukhnagar, Sonipat etc.



# Digitisation: No longer a cost

Post-lockdown, there is an acceleration of the trend of digitisation of logistics. There are multiple opportunities today, for instance, digitising the client side and helping existing service providers digitise, says **Sanjay Bhatia**, CEO, The Freightwalla.



Priyanshi Bana

**Q** How has the pandemic changed the thinking of the logistics provider?

We are a digital freight forwarding company helping move the cargo across the borders. The pandemic has affected us equally like the others. There was hardly any business during the lockdown. But as soon as the lockdowns were lifted, there has been a lot of interest shown by the logistics providers to upgrade themselves.

Earlier digitisation was considered as a cost centre by many and this often resulted in trying to cut costs from all the possible corners. However, the pandemic has forced the logistics companies to realise that cost cutting is no longer profitable. Many big companies now have started showing interest in bringing a balance in their decision-making process, where cost is no longer the determining factor. This is where a lot of companies have started showing interest in our services.

**Q** How has the company's performance been post-lockdown since last year?

Post-lockdown, there is an acceleration of the trend of digitisation of logistics. There are many different approaches that can be taken to improve the services with the help of digitisation. The client today is looking for an upgraded



logistics provider, which is going to be the future trend. There are multiple opportunities today, for instance, digitising the client side and secondly, helping existing service providers digitise. Presently we are focusing on the smaller clients and are in the process of improving their logistics functions.

**Q** What hurdles were faced in transiting from the traditional to digital?

Initially, being new in the logistics field, we faced a lot of difficulties since we were doing things differently. In the first year, it was challenging convincing the clients that things can be done differently. Client hesitation took some time to overcome. Currently, the challenge is re-scaling the people in the industry. Compared to earlier, they should now be more technology savvy, and have a better understanding of the technology systems being built. Failing

this, it would be very difficult for these providers to rise beyond a certain point. Thus, there is a need to have more of such professionals, especially in regard to the freight forwarding company.

**Q** India is currently facing a medical exigency of oxygen concentrators. Are you offering any services?

No, because we don't have our expertise in it and also in such sensitive times, I would refrain myself from getting into this and avoid creating any problems.

**Q** In your opinion, how has the second surge impacted the economy?

With the second surge, factories are facing a lot of heat, where labour is either testing positive or has migrated to villages. The situation on the ground is pretty bad since no one knows how long will this last. 🐦



**Sanjay Bhatia**  
CEO  
The Freightwalla

**🐦 Earlier digitisation was considered as a cost centre by many and this often resulted in trying to cut costs from all the possible corners. However, the pandemic has forced the logistics companies to realise that cost cutting is no longer profitable 🐦**



# Ship on the go with Shippigo.com

With Shippigo, companies get the tools for having everything automated – they can integrate their backend via API and monitor the dispatch, delivery, returns. Shippigo also provides warehouse fulfilment services to its clients, says **Saurabh Jaitly**, Co-founder, Shippigo.



CT Bureau

The Indian logistics sector is evolving every year, leaving behind bigger opportunities for merchants to help their customers receive the benefits of the shipping services. The sector is also revolutionising due to the involvement of new-age technologies which are very essential in today's market. While the pandemic has changed the game for many sectors, logistics companies with AI-enabled platforms are ensuring the business offerings continuously innovate and brace the market with the shipping service optimisation.

## SHIPPIGO'S EDGE

Shippigo is one such brand that works with e-commerce companies and online sellers and helps them take control of their logistic processes. The company provides a plug-and-play solution that enables companies to ship across the world in an instant. It also has integrations available with all the leading carriers and e-commerce enablers like Shopify, Woo Commerce, Magento, and a few more. At a click, orders can be synced and processed with a carrier of choice. Shippigo offers a host of delivery monitoring and customer engagement tools which enable a two-way interaction between the shipper and the customer. We also offer fulfilment solutions in which we



host the inventory for e-commerce companies in our warehouse, manage the inbound and outbound activities, pack and dispatch orders received before noon on the same day.

## TECH-ENABLEMENT

With state-of-the-art technology being deployed with proprietary algorithms, we also deliver unmatched performance, keeping you miles ahead of your competitors. We are the complete fulfilment platform that takes the pain out of shipping and makes it more accessible. Today it's so easy to get online and start selling. But it's so difficult to streamline and scale the order fulfilment process. You need good tie-ups with logistic partners; an invoice generation software that works with your website; a third-party tool to monitor the deliveries; another tool to update the client about the order status; and once you grow you need a bigger warehouse, packaging staff, warehouse management software. We offer all that on a single platform and get our clients to start with their dispatches in minutes.

Customers expect to be updated about their orders and they want a fast and convenient delivery, rescheduling, and

easy returns. This is where Shippigo comes to the rescue. With Shippigo, companies get the tools for having everything automated – they can integrate their backend via API and monitor the dispatch, delivery, returns. Shippigo also provides warehouse fulfilment services to its clients wherein they can store the inventory at our warehouse and we'll manage the rest. The company also keeps tabs on the inventory and process orders, offers same day dispatch options, handles cross marketplace inventory updates and gives a complete overview of all the shipments in transit, delivered, and returned all on one dashboard.

## SERVICE OFFERINGS

During the pandemic, the company had started with Automated COD verification – verify COD orders before dispatch. COD or Cash on Delivery accounts for approximately 70% of the total e-commerce order volume. The dependency on COD has further increased because of lockdowns and regional delivery challenges. To safeguard the interests of vendors and streamline the processes, Shippigo has rolled out a COD verification module, which allows the vendor to COD orders based on certain criteria before dispatching them. The company has witnessed a decrease of around 25% in RTOs due to the same. ↴



**Saurabh Jaitly**  
Co-founder  
Shippigo

↴ **Shippigo keeps tabs on the inventory and process orders, offers same day dispatch options, handles cross marketplace inventory updates and gives a complete overview of all the shipments in transit, delivered, and returned all on one dashboard** ↴

# Laying strong foundations with Cloud

We are closely working with our shipping and logistics customers to help enhance their digital agility, while improving productivity and optimising operational costs. We have a strong customer focus & bring a qualitative approach to solutions deployment on time, on budget, says **Selvakumar T, Director, Information Dynamics**.



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**Q** *What trends are you seeing in the logistics industry? How do Indian logistics companies approach modernisation?*

The logistics industry has evolved significantly in the last few years and kept pace with technology advancements. It's perhaps one of those industries where more and more new technologies are increasingly being used for process automation, track and trace and productivity enhancements while constantly driving down operational costs. Trends gaining fast traction include the uberization of freight, coming of age of freight marketplaces, community logistics hubs, innovations in

last-mile delivery, mobility enablement, wider integrations of systems (cross-entity) and rising use of RPA, AI/ML etc.

I feel a vast majority of Indian logistics providers are among the more open ones to experiment with emerging technologies that are best aligned to their business objectives. A number of Indian logistics providers are increasingly depending on automation/RPA, AI/ML and analytics as well as IoT to drive the right business impact.

**Q** *How are you helping shipping and logistics customers to improve business resilience?*

We are closely working with our shipping and logistics customers to help enhance their digital agility, while improving productivity and optimising operational costs. We have a strong customer focus and bring a qualitative approach to solutions/services deployment on time, on budget.

Our flagship solution for the shipping and logistics industry – Agency & Freight System (AFSYS) and SHIPLOGIX – are an industry leading application that's empowering the entire value chain of logistics and shipping – starting from carriers, NOVCC, and shipping agencies, all the way to freight



**Selvakumar T**  
Director  
Information Dynamics







🔥 **After trying out a number of popular Cloud providers, we finally decided to go with Oracle's second-generation Cloud infrastructure for superior price-performance-security benefits. With OCI, we are seeing greater flexibility, scalability and much more predictable/transparent pricing vis-à-vis other Cloud providers** 🔥

forwarders and clearing agents – to improve process efficiencies and end customer experience.

**How is Cloud helping you change growth orbits?**

The pandemic reiterated the criticality of the logistics industry for the world. And those logistics companies that were fairly ahead in their digital journey were the ones best positioned to cater to the unprecedented demand. In such a scenario, only Cloud can help organisations scale fast and accelerate digital journeys, but via a cost-effective OPEX model.

We are helping our shipping and logistics customers transform into

digital-first businesses – so they can be highly agile. And for this, a strong Cloud foundation is a prerequisite. A modern, secure Cloud infrastructure is key to remain agile in the wake of current and future business disruptions. Further, the prospect of high performance, low costs and state-of-the-art Cloud security will help our customers to future-proof their organisations.

**What made you choose Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) as your preferred Cloud provider?**

After trying out a number of popular Cloud providers, we finally decided to go with Oracle's second-generation Cloud infrastructure for superior price-

performance-security benefits. With OCI, we are seeing greater flexibility, scalability and much more predictable/transparent pricing vis-à-vis other Cloud providers. After moving to OCI, we realized 2x improvement in application performance and 30% additional cost savings compared to our previous IT setup. The OCI team is in regular touch with us, from proper Cloud enablement to helping us achieve continued Cloud success.

**What are your growth priorities? How will tech innovations help you get there?**

India, Middle East and Africa are our priority markets currently. In the next 12-18 months, we will be expanding our presence in North America as well. From an innovation standpoint, we will continue to invest in automation, AI/ML, data science and analytics, to help our customers put their data to better business use, leading to more effective decision-making and help them realise exponential business benefits. 🔥

**COST-EFFECTIVE MODEL**

🔥 **The pandemic reiterated the criticality of the logistics industry for the world. And those logistics companies that were fairly ahead in their digital journey were the ones best positioned to cater to the unprecedented demand. In such a scenario, only Cloud can help organisations scale fast and accelerate digital journeys, but via a cost-effective OPEX model.**

# Driving safe with HumSafer

Accessible to any truck driver across the country, our app is helping in addressing some key issues like driver safety, providing real time alerts in their local languages etc., with a 24X7 helpline. **Jehaan Kotwal**, Co-founder, HumSafer, shares with **CARGOTALK** his vision and plans.



Priyanshi Bana

## Kindly elaborate on HumSafer Driver Safety Foundation.

Our vision at HumSafer Driver Safety Foundation is to reduce road accidents and to improve the lives of truck drivers across the country. We run various programmes for the welfare of our truck drivers. One big initiative is our android mobile application, which can be easily accessible by any truck driver across the country. A lot of our initiatives are addressed through our mobile application so we can address a large community in a short span of time. Our app is also aimed at helping truck drivers improve their driving skills by giving gentle nudges when they are driving badly and providing rewards when they are driving well

## What initiatives has your foundation taken to improve the conditions of such drivers?

Our digital application provides truck drivers real time alerts in their local language and we also have a 24/7 help line, we have also enabled their families to know about their whereabouts. We do medical check-ups, provide insurance and inculcate financial literacy programmes, and there are many more in the pipeline which we are doing in collaboration with multiple partners. The latest addition to our programmes has been #DriveForOxygen to address the shortage of oxygen, which our country

is currently facing in this pandemic. We will be insuring, providing medical emergency funds and incentivizing them to drive safely.

## Since these truckers are performing arduous tasks in such difficult times, risking their own life, are they being treated as frontline workers as far as the vaccination is concerned?

The various transport lobbies and associations have been trying for the longest time to give them the frontline worker label, but this hasn't been successful. We even ran a campaign a few months after the first lockdown, #HornBajao Campaign, to address this in association with various stakeholders in the transport eco-system, and although we managed to have a large involvement, we had no success with the Ministry taking this issue up

## With the sudden second surge of COVID everywhere in the country, how was your foundation helpful while facing the shortage of truck drivers, if any?

We are working with the Logistics Skill Council to train over 2,500 drivers over the next few weeks to make sure there is no shortage of these HAZ cargo drivers. Currently through our app we want to retain these existing 4,000 drivers and keep

them motivated. We are giving up to ₹ 3,000 per driver per month and will also insure the existing drivers against COVID.

## What is your present network? Any expansion plans?

We have tied up with four of the six largest oxygen players and their 20 factories. Our expansion will be over all 33+ plants over the next few weeks. We have started off with 100 drivers in Pune and Mumbai as of May 10. As we get more CSR funds, we will be able to reach more drivers.

## Any difficulties/ hurdles being faced by you in these times of medical exigency that India is in?

We are getting the support from all the Oxygen partners, the Logistics



**Jehaan Kotwal**  
Co-founder  
HumSafer

 **We are working with the Logistics Skill Council to train over 2,500 drivers over the next few weeks to make sure there is no shortage of HAZ cargo drivers** 

## REACHING OUT

- ➔ We have tied up with four of the six largest oxygen players and their 20 factories.
- ➔ Our expansion will be over all 33+ plants over the next few weeks. We have started off with 100 drivers in Pune and Mumbai as of May 10. As we get more CSR funds, we will be able to reach more drivers.



Skill Council and the Ministry of Commerce. What we need now is the funds to be deployed to the drivers which is where the most of our energy is being diverted to at the moment. They are scared for their life but still work for over 14-16 hours every day and are yet completely neglected by everyone. If these 4,000+ drivers decide to stop driving for whatever reason our nation's oxygen supply will come to a standstill. People still don't understand that, and not enough attention is being put into this.

### Why an app and what can it do?

There are many safety tools and applications out there, the only difference is that they are either expensive or not easily accessible. And the ones which have managed to address the gaps, still only restrict the communication between the individual truck driver and the transporter/owner/broker. We want to bring this fragmented community together, and

like most devices not merely penalise drivers when they drive poorly but appreciate them for good behaviour.

Thanks to cheaper smartphones, better connectivity and affordable data services, along with smartphone adoption, we are able to find a 70% smartphone adoption in our truck driver community and this number is only increasing rapidly in the past decade.


There are many programmes which will be on-ground but most of individual deliveries such as providing monetary incentives through their UPI straight into their bank accounts and verifying the eligibility for insurance through a simple Aadhar verification API makes digital a great medium for delivering our services. Our aim is to reach scale at a rapid pace to create the impact that we envision and for this, we believe an android application built on the foundation of Human Centered Design and observed ground realities is the way to go. 



# Fast-tracking clearances

**T**he second wave of COVID-19 has created an acute need for medical supplies. The country today faces shortage of oxygen supply support and other COVID 19-related goods.

The overstretched COVID hospitals due to the second wave and the current challenge in oxygen necessitates that COVID care be done at home to the extent possible. The Centre and state governments have taken various measures to augment the production of medical oxygen in the country.

 **The decision to simplify customs process, waive duty and reduce GST are all excellent moves to help the general public in the current crisis** 

CBIC too has undertaken large-scale efforts to ease and expedite the import of oxygen concentrators to deal with this acute shortage of oxygen the country is faced with. "The need and shortage of oxygen concentrators in the country has led to a huge surge in import of O2 concentrators by individuals, corporates, traders and aid agencies. It is critical that these life-saving shipments get delivered at the earliest. While simplified regulations are needed to speed up the process, it is critical that shipments come with correct documentation. The

decision to simplify customs process, waive duty and reduce GST are all excellent moves to help the general public in the current crisis," said **R S Subramanian**, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, DHL Express India.

There is a huge surge in imports of COVID-19 related emergency products from the USA, the EU, Far East and China by individuals, corporates for their own usage, by import traders and aid agencies. In a welcome move, CBIC has simplified the procedures through a recent notification and instruction that will enable express and logistic companies to speed up clearances for emergency medical equipment – and help bring pandemic spread



**R S Subramanian**  
Senior Vice President and MD,  
DHL Express India

under control. While there is widespread interest and action on this topic, there is a need for awareness and adherence to a few simple rules to ensure that the emergency supplies do not get stuck at border controls and customs clearance because of ignorance of the shipper or consignee.

# Customised map data management solutions

What sets us apart from our competitors is our unique ability to offer open-source solutions' customisability, developer friendliness and low cost with proprietary solutions' high degree of performance and quality, says **Gaurav Bubna**, Co-founder, NextBillion.ai.



CT Bureau

## Do give us a brief about NextBillion.ai.

NextBillion.ai is a spatial data platform that helps enterprises manage location data and adopt an AI-first approach at scale for every use case and geography. We are backed by Falcon Edge Capital, Lightspeed India Partners and M12 - Microsoft's Venture Fund. We offer tailored Map Data Management services, be it creating custom maps, managing custom data layers or overlaying proprietary data on top of APIs/location platforms.

We provide seamless downstream integrations with all standard mapping engines — APIs, SDKs, Map Tiles, Geocoding and Route Optimisation. NextBillion.ai also partners with system integrator experts in the enterprise location application ecosystem — to fill the gaps that can't be served by existing solutions like Google Maps, Mapbox, HERE and TomTom. Our agile architecture can merge, manage, process, enhance, and edit location data of any type/volume and from any source — open source, proprietary, existing mapping solutions or real-time.

## What is Map Self Reliance?

Maps and location intelligence sit at the core of every industry's growth and development. Even more so after 2020, when the world had to find a

way to function with restrictions on mobility and unprecedented logistical challenges. Right from meeting the huge surge in demand for home delivery services, optimising supply chains to designing safe commute systems, the maps and location data industry helped enterprises to manage their operations during the pandemic.

Enterprises are now not only generating huge volumes of raw data but also have access to a free crowdsourced map data alternative — OpenStreetMap (OSM). Using that, these businesses can build their in-house, customised and owned maps stack and become map self-reliant. But highly specialised mapping expertise is needed to create enterprise-grade tools and solutions out of the data generated from various sources. NextBillion.ai has stepped into this huge unexplored space in the spatial data management industry and is enabling enterprises to build a self-sustaining location ecosystem.

## What are the challenges being faced by you from your competitors? What steps are being taken to overcome them?

Within the broader mapping and location services market, NextBillion.ai specialises in outdoor location-based services for enterprises, a space otherwise dominated by Google Maps,

HERE and TomTom (all of whom maintain high cost and proprietary base map data). There are other players who build APIs, SDKs and other location services on top of existing map data sources. Mapbox, which has built a developer-oriented product, has also emerged as a formidable competitor.

What sets us apart from our competitors is our unique ability to offer open-source solutions' customisability, developer friendliness and low cost with proprietary solutions' high degree of performance and quality. As an industry-leading spatial data platform, NextBillion.ai's goal is to focus on solving a fundamental problem through our authoritative map data management solutions. Our tech is built for a multi-tenant world and can be scaled remotely from anywhere across the globe. We intend to be a pure software business with SaaS margins.

## What is your present network?

The company has scaled to supporting 15 customers across 20 countries and helped enterprises map over 2.5M miles of roads and handled 20B+ API calls. We are serving top customers including some global category leaders in e-commerce, logistics, food delivery, and groceries. We are expecting to 5x our customer base this year and 4x our annual revenues for 2021. 



**Gaurav Bubna**  
Co-founder  
NextBillion.ai

 **NextBillion.ai has stepped into the huge unexplored space in the spatial data management industry and is enabling enterprises to build a self-sustaining location ecosystem** 



# Tracking parcels in real time

Digital solutions create an end-to-end audit trail for every single parcel passing through your facility – helping you minimise lost goods and meet your delivery Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Ashish P. Dhakan, MD & CEO, Prama Hikvision India shares his views with **CARGOTALK**.



Since e-commerce has steadily been on the rise globally in recent years, many people prefer not to visit physical stores as usual, leading to a major boom in online shopping and home parcel delivery. This means there are unprecedented opportunities for e-commerce and logistics companies to expand their businesses and grow their revenues. However, success depends on increasing performance and throughput, while also tracking and securing thousands of parcels a day as they head towards end-customers' addresses.

## WHY MANUAL PROCESSES MAKE PARCEL TRACKING HARDER

For logistics providers that pack, quality check, and deliver thousands of parcels every day, supply chain monitoring and security can be a major challenge. In the case of many logistics companies, the sheer volume of goods passing through distribution and fulfillment centres creates major challenges for tracking and securing parcels effectively. This is especially the case during manual steps in the parcel delivery process, such as opening boxes to conduct quality control checks, and packing parcels for delivery to customers' addresses.

This is because manual processes inevitably introduce an element of risk into the parcel delivery process. Errors can occur, for example, leading to lost or mis-directed parcels. Additionally, manual interventions in the supply chain may increase the risk of lost inventory, especially where effective monitoring systems and processes are absent.

The question for logistics providers processing thousands or even tens of thousands of parcels a day, is how to minimise the risk of errors and loss of goods across the entire, end-to-end delivery process.

## TRACK EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR PARCELS WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Using a combination of digital technologies, it's now possible to monitor goods as they flow through your facility in real time. In particular, smart video cameras can be connected to barcode scanners, allowing you to understand exactly where goods and parcels are located, and how they are moving through your facility.

By cross referencing data from cameras and scanners, you can quickly access footage of incidents, such as goods that are dropped or damaged.

In the same way, you can identify goods that were damaged before they reached you, proving that your teams were not responsible for breakages.

## THE VALUE OF AN END-TO-END AUDIT TRAIL

By creating an end-to-end audit trail for every parcel, this kind of solution allows you to monitor your performance on an ongoing basis, and to make operational improvements that increase your productivity and throughput. Equally importantly, you can also find out exactly what happened to goods that are lost or stolen from your supply chain and take immediate action if required.

If goods are lost, for example, you can quickly cross reference time and date information from barcode scanners with video footage recorded by security cameras. You can then see exactly what happened, giving you clear evidence for later use.

Many times, of course, mistakes and issues are innocent, such as parcels stuck in joints between conveyer belts. However, with digital, end-to-end parcel tracking, these kinds of events are also fast and easy to spot, ensuring that you can meet your delivery Service Level Agreements (SLAs). ↴



**Ashish P. Dhakan**  
MD & CEO  
Prama Hikvision India

↴ **The question for logistics providers processing thousands or even tens of thousands of parcels a day, is how to minimise the risk of errors and loss of goods across the entire, end-to-end delivery process** ↴

# Flying high to touch base remotely:



Focusing on the movement of goods to and from smaller towns to major hubs will see an exponential growth once the transportation time is reduced considerably. **Capt. Karthik Hegde**, Chairman & CEO, AeroKing speaks about his vision and plans.



Priyanshi Bana

## How soon will AeroKing Airlines start its operations?

We received our NOC (No Objection Certificate) from the Ministry of Civil Aviation last month and have initiated our process on obtaining our AOP (Air Operators Permit). We are hopeful on completing this process in the next six months and should start operations by the end of October or early November.

We initially intend on leasing three ATR 72-500 aircrafts, the first one would be joining us in the month of September and the second and third aircraft will be joining us in the month of January 2022. We will then react to market demand and plan our routes and induction of further aircrafts depending on the

market scenario. Our business plan is to induct eight ATRs stationed across the country to help boost our country's regional logistics supply chain and we have capacity to induct all eight aircrafts to meet market demand in three years if needed.

## Since the airlines is targeting Tier II & III cities, once operational, how many cities do you think you can cater to and how do you see connecting to smaller cities will help build the business?

We intend to have bases in major metro cities of our country and connect smaller cities to these metros from there. The number of stations catered to will be directly proportional to number

of aircrafts stationed at a particular base. This would again depend on the market demand.

Goods movement to and from smaller towns to major hubs will see an exponential growth when goods are moved in a couple of hours which would generally take 10-15 hours by road or other means of transport. This would also give a distinct advantage to e-commerce giants, traders, manufacturers etc., to penetrate our Indian market like never before. Also, industrial, trade and agricultural goods can now reach their destinations faster if they have aircrafts flying them to their destinations at affordable rates which would tremendously reduce their losses



**Capt. Karthik Hegde**  
Chairman & CEO  
AeroKing







**✈ Our business plan is to induct eight ATRs stationed across the country to help boost our country's regional logistics supply chain and we have capacity to induct all eight aircrafts to meet market demand in three years if needed ✈**

incurred due to damage and pilferage related to longer travel time.

**Q** *As mentioned, the flights would be based on the customer requirements. Could you please elaborate on this?*

Our airline is a NSOP Carrier, which simply means we are a non-scheduled operator, where we do not have to fly

a particular route everyday if there is no business. This provides us with great flexibility to cater to various customers according to their requirements.

Therefore, if a customer has an urgent requirement to transport his/her goods, we can change or alter our schedule to cater to his/her requirements.

**Q** *AeroKing is a cargo airline, what all potential goods are you focusing on? Is your airline prepared to handle temperature and time-sensitive essential goods?*

As a cargo airline we are open to transport all goods fit for transport including dangerous goods as long as they meet laid down requirements for safe transports of goods via air. Yes, our airline will definitely be able to handle temperature and time-sensitive essential goods.

**Q** *In present COVID times, what opportunities do you see for your airline to grow?*

Our plans to start a cargo airline has been in the pipeline for a little more than two years which was during the pre-COVID times. We saw great potential for a cargo carrier back then and this importance and potential came to the limelight as our nation and this world at large was hit by this devastating pandemic. We have seen and continue seeing tremendous potential for growth for our airline in our country and we hope to capitalize on this demand. During these difficult times we are fully committed to help serve our country and help connect our nation better to cater to various demands. With active support from the government and the concerned authorities we should be able to achieve this soon. ✈



**SHORTER TRAVEL TIME**

➔ Industrial, trade and agricultural goods can now reach their destinations faster if they have aircrafts flying them to their destinations at affordable rates which would tremendously reduce their losses incurred due to damage and pilferage related to longer travel time.

# Trucking SaaS: Anytime, anywhere

TruckNet provides Cloud-based secure SaaS (Software as a Service) solution for manufacturing and distribution companies by integrating the Trucking eco-system digitally. **Anjani Mandal**, CEO, TruckNet Digital Technologies speaks about the importance of Cloud-based technology in supply chain.



Priyanshi Bana



**Anjani Mandal**  
CEO  
TruckNet Digital Technologies

**Do give us a brief about TruckNet Digital Technologies.**

TruckNet Digital is a logistics and supply chain technology company which helps manufacturing and distribution companies by integrating the Trucking eco-system digitally. Once fully deployed within an organisation, it has the potential of providing a 30% improved performance in overall logistics efficiency & cost. It is a single integrated solution that enables

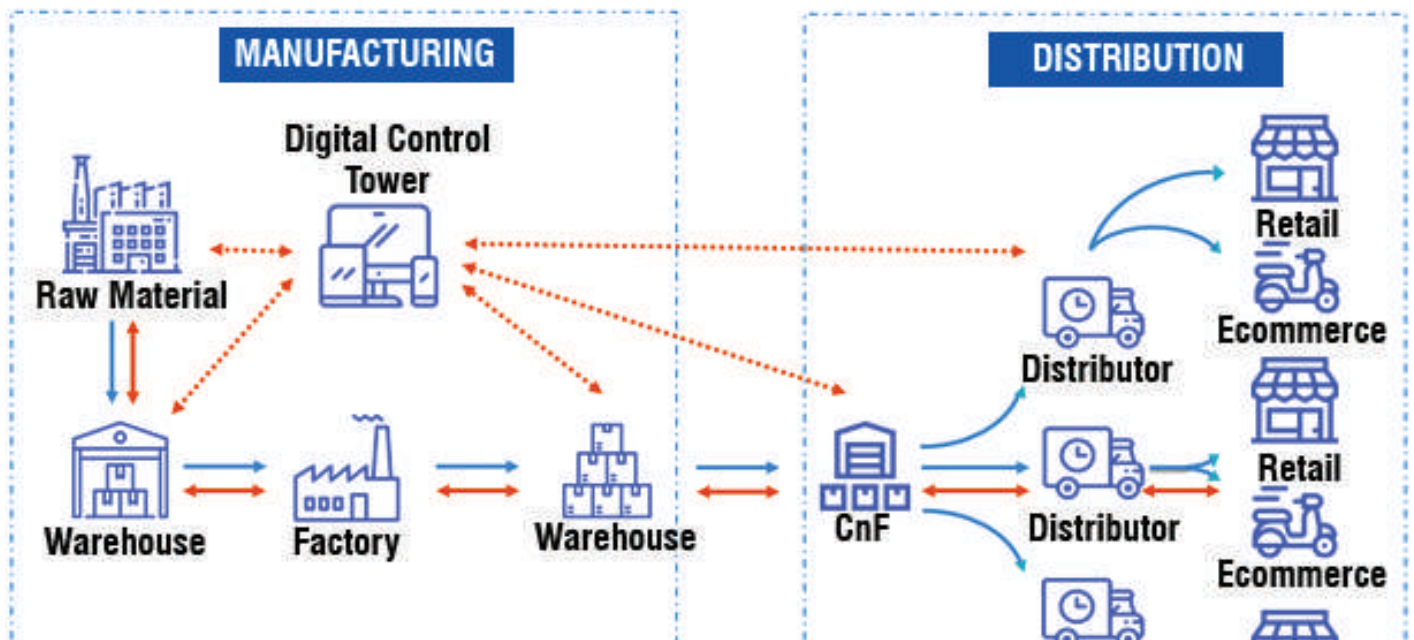
transacting, controlling, analysing as well as improving & optimising logistics performance. This would be as much as 20% over the first few quarters of implementation.

Our Digital Logistics Platform on the Cloud allows organisations to connect with all the stakeholders in their value chain and have a single source of truth. Currently supply chains are disparate silos operating with minimal practice collaboration, and often run

in a trust deficit environment. Lower trust always leads to higher costs, as you end up paying more for improved transparency, predictability, and control in your operations.

**What are the services offered by TruckNet? How do you think these services are proving to be beneficial in the movement of the consignments?**

TruckNet is a Cloud-based secure SaaS (Software as a Service) solution







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digitisation in the industry, and the pandemic has shown how critical it is for organisations to embrace that change. The second wave has essentially proven beyond doubt that it is critical for organisations to build resilience into their operations. In a connected world, the chances of disruptions global and local are large, and organisations are now forced to accept it as a fact. As an organisation driving digitisation, this has admittedly made our conversations easier and audiences receptive to our message.

for manufacturing and distribution companies. It helps users interact with their suppliers digitally and facilitates two-way business interaction from indent to delivery to payment in a digital solution. It is accessible 'anytime, anywhere' for every user – including from their mobile. The solution deployment time is extremely short and starts delivering cost benefits from the first three months of implementation.

Irrespective of lockdowns and mobility restrictions of logistics managers of the company, business transactions from factories / warehouses to delivery points can continue seamlessly. Our platform helps companies to manage operations by addressing exceptions. From active manual operations involving paper-based, repetitive, error prone processes, organisations can move to paperless, automated, and resilient processes.

**Once fully deployed within an organisation, the Trucking eco-system has the potential of providing a 30 per cent improved performance in overall logistics efficiency & cost**

to the vast unorganised sector we operate in. If most transporters in India are not able or willing to install GPS on their trucks, we as a platform provider need to build practical solutions to work around that.

The solution is integrating for communication & conducting business transactions between a large pool of vendor partners with the shippers at all times. The efficiency in communication facilitates any shipper to interact with a large pool of suppliers as & when the need arises – including in an ad hoc fashion.

**How has the pandemic, specifically the second surge, affected the business of your company?**

We are encouraging and advising organisations to take the steps for digital transformation. We are driving

**Do you think technology has an eminent role in coming times? How and why?**

Digitisation and automation and new engineering technology is dramatically rewriting the variables of competitive advantage, and as a result, every company now has to be a technology-enabled company. This is where TruckNet's solution is going to add that cutting-edge for organisations. Cost productivity will be a quick win for the shipper with the Transportation eco-system integration solution.

It is said that the potential of improvement in overall supply chain efficiency owing to the active cooperation between vendor & customer will take some more time to mature and has the potential to improve the overall supply chain efficiency between 15% & 25%.

While organisations could afford to adopt technology at their own pace and timelines in the past, today it has come to a stage of quick change or death. The average lifespan of companies is coming down due to technology-enabled disruptions, and organisations now have to stay abreast of the latest technologies and adopt them proactively.

## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Digitisation and automation and new engineering technology is dramatically rewriting the variables of competitive advantage, and as a result, every company now has to be a technology-enabled company. This is where TruckNet's solution is going to add that cutting-edge for organisations. Cost productivity will be a quick win for the shipper with the Transportation eco-system integration solution.

**What is your present network?**

Our primary focus is on enabling organisations to manage their primary outbound logistics. Our focus is on being the most practical digitisation platform for Indian businesses – one can build the most automated platform possible as the technology today allows, but the practicality of such solutions will be minimal due





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## PRIME MARITIME carries shipments of Medical Oxygen from Kuwait to Nhava Sheva

When the nation is reeling under the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Maritime has contributed by carrying shipments of Medical Oxygen from Kuwait to Nhava Sheva.



The shipments of 6x20' (Gr weight 55 MT)

were loaded from Shuaiba Port on May 5 on MV Capt Kattleman and were transhipped at Jebel Ali for further on-carriage to Nhava Sheva on May 10. The second carrier being Nagoya Tower that berthed at APMT Nhava Sheva on May 15. Prime Maritime acknowledged the support given by Global Feeders in handling these time-sensitive shipments. The containers were destuffed and cargo delivered onto the trucks waiting to transport them to medical facilities as per Red Cross directives.

## CSMIA facilitates transportation of approx. 387 tonnes of COVID relief supplies

With the advent of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has facilitated the transportation of over 387 tonnes of COVID relief supplies. Since the first shipment which arrived on April 26, CSMIA has registered the arrival of approximately 110 flights originating from 20 destinations across the globe. The airport has been prioritising the shipments of essential medical supplies and achieved an overall processing time of 15 minutes



## SPOTON LOGISTICS enables visibility-driven shipments of oxygen concentrators pan India



Spoton Logistics, India's premier technology, and engineering-driven logistics company have been successfully delivering FDA-approved oxygen concentrators since April 2021. The company stepped forward to enable seamless delivery of one of the most critical medical equipment needed by COVID patients all across India. Spoton Commenting on the development, Uday Sharma, COO, Spoton Logistics stated, "To ensure that the demand of oxygen concentrators is effectively met, seamless and well-managed logistics is the key.

## BLUE DART forms Blue Dart Med-Express Consortium for delivery of vaccines

Blue Dart, India's leading express logistics service provider and part of the Deutsche Post DHL Group (DPDHL) formed Blue Dart Med-Express Consortium with the mission of revolutionising the delivery of vaccines and emergency medical supplies to the remotest parts of India with drones. Blue Dart Med-Express Consortium is part of the 'Medicine from the Sky' project in collaboration with the government of Telangana, World Economic Forum, Niti Aayog and Healthnet Global. The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has granted the project with necessary exemptions and rights to fly drone flights on an experimental basis in Telangana.



## ALLCARGO LOGISTICS transports 2 mn masks for Maharashtra govt. from Singapore

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope reached out to Allcargo Chairman Shashi Kiran Shetty to help procure masks for urgent distribution across the interiors of the state. To meet the state's demand, Allcargo has already transported 2 million masks from Singapore. Another 1 million are to be brought in from the USA, China, and other countries. Following the logistics industry initiative led by Shetty in April when Allcargo flew in 500 oxygen concentrators, Bluewater Lines provided for the containers this time.

Allcargo Logistics, part of The Avvashya Group offers specialised logistics services across Multimodal Transport Operations, Container Freight Station Operations/Inland Container Depot Operations and Project & Engineering Solutions and Logistics Park.





## BANGALORE INT'L AIRPORT sets up Dedicated Oxygen Centre

COV-AID@BLR, a 150-bed oxygenated COVID-19 treatment centre at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAB/BLR Airport), has been operationalised. The facility was virtually inaugurated by Chief Minister of Karnataka B S Yediyurappa on May 19, 2021 during his visit to the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAB/BLR Airport). Located near the cargo terminals of BLR Airport, COV-AID@BLR is open for the public and employees from the BLR Airport ecosystem

The facility is designed to treat patients who are asymptomatic, with mild hypoxia (a condition in which the body or a region of the body is deprived of adequate oxygen supply at the tissue level). It is designed to be a transit oxygen delivery centre, which would provide much-needed relief and treatment for patients.

## NICDC LOGISTICS DATA SERVICES extends services to 9 SEZs across India

NICDC Logistics Data Services (NLDS), a joint venture between the Government of India, represented by the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust, and NEC Corporation, a leader in the integration of IT and network technologies has announced extension of its Logistics Data Bank (LDB) services at 9 major Special Economic Zones (SEZ) across India to improve last-mile container visibility.

Major SEZs include Visakhapatnam, SEEPZ Mumbai, Surat, MEPZ Chennai, Cochin, Kandla, Noida, Mangalore and Dahej SEZ.



Commenting on the occasion, **Ichiro Oshima**, CEO, NLDS said, "The need for more accurate end-to-end container visibility was apparent when exporters and importers experienced

significant delays in container movement. With end-to-end container tracking, users can now easily identify the bottlenecks and ease their operations. Last-mile container visibility stands in-line with NLDS' objective of improving the export and import (EXIM) trade and reducing the logistics cost."

## ADANI PORTS handle cargo volume of 247 MMT, registering a growth of 11%

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone has reported a consolidated net profit of ₹ 1,288 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2021. The company had posted a profit of ₹ 334 crore in the year-ago period. The company's March-quarter consolidated revenues from the logistics business stood at ₹ 958 crore. Increased cargo volume, operational efficiencies enabled port EBITDA to grow by 15% from ₹ 6,593 cr. in FY20 to ₹ 7,560 crore in FY21. Logistics business has reported an EBITDA of ₹ 226 crore in FY21 and maintained the EBITDA margin at 24%.



## ZIPAWORLD sets forth to the Middle East and GCC market



**Dr Amrish Kumar**  
Founder  
Zipaworld

Zipaworld, the logistics e-Mall of India, has joined hands with ASYAD Group of Oman which is the centralised and integrated logistics service provider across Oman and GCC countries.

The logistics start-up has taken a huge leap into the global arena by venturing into the Middle East and GCC market, as envisioned by Dr Amrish Kumar, the Founder of Zipaworld, during the last quarter of 2020.

After the launch of their digital Ocean Freight Module and thereafter the strategic stake in pioneers of domestic logistics Radiant X-Ways Logistic, this move comes as a prospective way forward into the global logistics front.

## AMBUJA CEMENT introduces green fuel on captive ships

Ambuja Cement has successfully completed sea trials of using soya extract-based biofuel in two of its cement carriers — Ambuja Mukund and Ambuja Vaibhav. Switching to biodiesel will reduce CO2 emissions from shipping lines by 25%, which in turn will strengthen India's ability to deliver on its commitment made under the Paris Accord. This makes Ambuja Cement not just the first Indian company to move towards the decarbonisation of the country's coastal shipping lines but also advancing its focus on innovation and sustainability.



## QATAR AIRWAYS DOHA

The Governing Board of the oneworld global airline alliance has appointed Qatar Airways' Group Chief Executive, **His Excellency Akbar Al Baker** to serve as its Chairman. Al Baker will oversee the alliance's governance, chair oneworld's Governing Board meetings and work closely with oneworld CEO Rob Gurney and the alliance's management team. Al Baker stated, "I am honoured to be chosen by my fellow Board members to lead the Governing Board for oneworld."



## FBCCI BANGLADESH

**Md Jashim Uddin**, a representative of the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association, has been elected President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) for 2021-23. "Addressing the challenges of the fallouts of COVID-19 facing our businesses would be my priority." My Board will sit with the government to negotiate so that we can successfully implement the stimulus package for the greater interest of the business community."



## CRANE WORLDWIDE LOGISTICS DELHI

Crane Worldwide Logistics has appointed **John O'Connor** into the newly created role of Executive Vice President, Strategic Development. O'Connor, who has more than 28 years of experience in the logistics industry, will drive Crane's strategic development and enhance the integrated supply chain solutions offered to its international clients. O'Connor's vast experience will help address the ongoing supply changes in today's market and in the future.



## PELI BIOTHERMAL UK

Peli BioThermal has promoted **Dominic Hyde** to the role of Vice President of Global Services. In this role, Hyde will expand his responsibilities to all global services, including the worldwide service network and the rental programme, Cr do on Reserve and Cr do on Demand. He previously occupied the role of Vice President of Cr do on Demand. Hyde has overseen the expansion of the company's Cr do on Demand rental programme by growing global drop points, service centres and network stations.

## DB SCHENKER SINGAPORE

DB Schenker has announced **Aditi Rasquinha** as the new Head of Ocean Freight for the APAC region and she will join on July 1, 2021, at DB Schenker's APAC regional head office in Singapore. She will join DB Schenker from Kühne + Nagel, where she has held several senior management positions since 2014, most recently as Director of Sea Freight for the Netherlands. She previously served in various leadership roles across the Asia-Pacific at DHL Global Forwarding.



## CHAPMAN FREEBORN UK

Chapman Freeborn has appointed **Laurent Jossa** as its new Group Chief Information Officer (CIO) as it looks to transition into a fully paperless organisation. Jossa has more than 20 years of experience working at a variety of aviation and airfreight companies. In his new role, Jossa will manage the company's IT framework, analysing and mapping functions and processes across all areas of the business, before implementing digital systems to drive efficiencies and improvements.



## CARGO.ONE BERLIN

Digital booking platform cargo.one has appointed **Simson Demmer** into the role of Senior Director, Airline Products. Demmer, who has ten years of experience in the industry, was previously Head of Analytics and Business Development – Network Management at Lufthansa Cargo, where he led its digital transformation process. Demmer commented, "I am truly excited to be joining cargo.one at such an interesting point in the company's journey."



## EFL INTERNATIONAL DUBLIN

Dublin-based freight forwarder EFL International Distribution has appointed **Kevin Blake** as Sales and Development Manager. Blake was previously Operations Manager at Freightteam Ireland and over the last two decades had management responsibility for a number of the company's areas of operation including a daily UK groupage trailer service, a Turkish road service, a bonded warehouse, as well as a forwarding department. Blake has joined at a time when the company is performing well.





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