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ADOPTING TECH**
in logistics & MSMEs

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India-UK trade pact, a win-win situation for both economies

The India-UK FTA marks a step in strengthening economic ties between the two nations. It eliminates tariffs on 99% of Indian exports to the UK — benefitting sectors, such as textiles, engineering and processed foods, while gradually reducing duties on 90% of UK exports to India.



CT Bureau

To boost bilateral trade, India and UK signed the historic Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which is likely to come into force after certain legal clearances in a few months from the United Kingdom Government. The pact is expected to boost bilateral trade from US\$ 57 billion in 2024 to US\$ 120 billion by 2030.

With 99 per cent of Indian exports getting duty-free access and UK luxury goods entering Indian markets at

FTA will boost trade-led growth, support sectoral development & position India's air cargo and logistics sectors as vital players

slashed tariffs, this FTA guarantees a massive boost to bilateral trade. The pact will slash tariffs on goods from textiles to whisky and cars

and allow more market access for businesses.

India's leather and footwear exports to the UK are expected to more than double from \$494 million in 2024 to US\$1 billion within three years, said Piyush Goyal, Union Commerce and Industry Minister, as per reports. The agreement also aims to simplify customs procedures, align technical standards and ensure protection of Indian Geographical Indications (GI) such as Kolhapuri footwear and Mojari, allowing Indian products to gain enhanced visibility in the UK's \$8.7 billion leather and footwear market, added the minister.

As per experts, around 99 per cent of Indian exports will have zero-duty access to the UK market, enhancing export competitiveness. Furthermore, the import duties on 90 per cent of tariff lines will be reduced, with 85 per cent of these becoming completely tariff-free over the next 10 years, offering notable savings for Indian consumers and businesses.

SMEs will also gain from the agreement. The agreement



Britain's Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi

is expected to boost exports from India's labour-intensive sectors, including textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, automotive parts, engines and organic chemicals, creating new business and employment opportunities. As trade volumes grow

in India, it is being anticipated that increased investments in logistics infrastructure, technology and multimodal connectivity will handle the surge efficiently. The agreement reinforces India's ambition to play a greater role in global value chains.

At its core, the FTA is a strategic enabler, opening up trade-led growth, supporting sectoral development and positioning India's cargo and logistics industry as a vital pillar of international commerce, said experts. The Indian professionals working temporarily in the UK will benefit from a three-year exemption from social security contributions, reducing the financial burden for employees and employers. In conclusion, the deal projects be a win-win situation for both countries.



FTA to give fillip to Indian exports to the UK

“ India is formalising an FTA with the UK, which will bring potential benefits that could double the bilateral trade to US\$ 120 billion by 2030. The FTA eliminates tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports to the UK. In the geopolitical uncertainty, this FTA is poised to give a fillip to exports, stimulate demand and strengthen supply.”



Prediman Koul
Chief Executive Officer
Jeena & Company

Indian EXIM trade increases competitiveness

“ The FTA is poised to enhance bilateral trade by reducing tariffs, easing customs process and opening access across key sectors. For Indian EXIM trade, this translates to hiked competitiveness, especially in textiles, engineering goods and pharma. As trade flows deepen, we anticipate a ripple effect on multimodal logistics, warehousing and air & sea links.”



Jalpa H Vithalani
Group Managing Director
Global Aviation Services

FTA to result in increased volumes

“ The FTA marks an inflection point for Indian EXIM trade. With zero-duty access across important sectors, Indian exporters would gain a competitive edge in the UK market. This will translate into increased volumes, optimised routing and deeper supply chain integration between India and Europe.”



Satish Lakkaraju
CEO, NexGen Logistics
(Garudavega)

FTA to take 15 months for full implementation

“ The new FTA, which is likely to boost bilateral trade between India and the UK by £25.5 billion, may take 15 months for full implementation. Upon FTA finalisation, 99 per cent of Indian exports will enjoy zero-duty access to the UK market. Import duties on 90 per cent of tariff lines will be reduced, with 85 per cent of these becoming tariff-free.”



Sunil Kohli
Managing Director
Rahat Cargo

Gems & jewellery exports likely to double

“ The India-UK FTA targets doubling of bilateral trade to US\$ 120 billion by 2030 with an annual boost of US\$ 34 billion. India gains 99 per cent duty-free access for its goods to the UK. Gems & jewellery exports are set to double from US\$ 941 million. The FTA commits to 48-hour customs clearance and promotes digital trade.”



Apeksha Gupta
Head
VCI Foundation

India to outdo Vietnam, Bangladesh in textiles

“ The India-UK FTA was long awaited. With the current trade volatility, Indian trade will be in a stable position with the UK in the future. We hope to outperform Vietnam, Turkey and Bangladesh in textiles and footwear. Under the FTA, India eyes the UK's pharma market with not just medical devices and generics.”



Dipen Lalsodagar
Deputy Director Cargo
Sales, Global Aviation
Services

Pact will fast-track cross border commerce

“ The Indo-UK FTA marks a historic shift, transforming the dynamics of trade between the two nations. By reducing tariffs and simplifying customs, the FTA will fast-track cross-border commerce, fuel demand for warehouses and transportation. The FTA is likely to attract UK investments in Indian logistics start-ups & strengthen last-mile delivery.”



Mohit Kapoor
Chairperson, Event
Committee and
Management, WAI

Agreement may result in UK investments to India

“ The trade pact unlocks exciting new opportunities. It will eliminate tariffs on around 99 per cent of Indian exports to the UK. Logistics and freight sectors — ports such as Nhava Sheva, Chennai and air-cargo hubs — may see increased containerised and reefer traffic. As trade volumes grow, we expect increased investments in logistics infra and technology.”



Rajen Bhatia
Chairman
ACAAI Western Region

FTA will strengthen economic collaboration

“ The agreement represents a leap for Indian EXIM trade and the air cargo industry. This pact will strengthen that bond through economic collaboration. By eliminating tariffs and easing customs, the FTA is set to enhance trade flows, reduce costs and improve supply chain efficiency between the two nations. This will benefit air and sea freight ops, warehousing & distribution networks.”



Abhishek Goyal
CEO & Executive Director
Aeroprime Group

UP to develop 27 integrated logistics clusters in 26 districts

Twenty-seven integrated manufacturing and logistics clusters (IMLCs) will be set up in 26 districts of UP — along five expressways, spanning 13,240 acres. At 3,707 acres, the Ganga Expressway covers 11 districts, while the Gorakhpur Link Expressway node, the smallest at 514 acres, covers two.



CT Bureau

Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, announced that 27 integrated manufacturing and logistics clusters (IMLCs) will be built across 26 districts of the state. These clusters will be set up along five expressways, spanning 13,240 acres. Of this, 9,864 acres have already been acquired, while the acquisition process for the remaining 3,376 acres is underway.

These are likely to boost economic development and aim to attract global investment, according to reports. “Uttar Pradesh is emerging as a logistics hub, driven by major infrastructure developments under the PM Gati Shakti initiative,” the CM said. With projects such as the upcoming green-field Jewar Airport, Varanasi multimodal logistics park, dedicated freight corridors and the Ganga and Purvanchal expressways, the state is building an integrated multimodal network of road, rail, air and waterways.



“Uttar Pradesh is emerging as a logistics hub, driven by major infra developments under the PM Gati Shakti initiative.”

The Bundelkhand Expressway is the largest in terms of area. The Ganga Expressway covers the most districts, spanning 11 districts across 3,707 acres. The Gorakhpur

Link Expressway node is the smallest, covering 514 acres across two districts — Gorakhpur (361 acres) and Ambedkar Nagar (153 acres). These developments aim to reduce logistics costs, improve cargo movement and support industrial growth, positioning UP as a key player in India's logistics and supply chain ecosystem.

The IMLCs will utilise the state's extensive expressway network, enhance logistics and reduce travel time. The clusters will offer attractive

land rates, specialised logistics facilities, seamless connectivity, dedicated basic infrastructure, transparent land allocation process, favourable industrial environment and skilled labour. As per reports, investors will be offered plots at competitive prices, while specialised logistics facilities will be provided and there will be convenient access to road, rail and air connectivity.



INSIGHTS

- These clusters are to be set up along five expressways, spanning over 13,240 acres, of which 9,864 acres have already been acquired.
- The acquisition process for the remaining acreage is underway.
- These IMLCs are likely to boost economic development and attract investment.
- UP is building multimodal network of road, rail, air and waterways.

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FOREIGN NATIONS BETTING ON INDIA'S CARGO BOOM?



With PMGS and NLP streamlining multimodal link and attracting global investment, the world is eyeing India due to its location, expanding manufacturing base and logistics infra. As companies diversify supply chains beyond China, India stands out with export potential, booming e-commerce and focus on digital and sustainable logistics — positioning itself as vital player in the future of global cargo movement.



Ritika Arora Bhola

The world is witnessing India as a pivotal player in the air cargo and logistics landscape. From rising exports to investments in infrastructure, the world's leading logistics operators, cargo terminal investors and technology solution providers are placing long-term bets on Indian influence on global freight movement.

With government initiatives, such as 'Make in India', PMGS, NLP, Sagarmala and Self-Reliant India, the nation is strengthening its logistics backbone and positioning itself as an alternative in global cargo corridors

— a move that has caught the attention of industry leaders worldwide.

Aircraft manufacturers, such as Boeing or Airbus, mobile phones major, Apple, international retail brands and consumer durable firms, have all established manufacturing plants across India. Why? Because of the grow-

ing potential and trust of foreign investors in the Indian market.

The country's proximity to growing consumer markets in Southeast Asia along with trade routes to Europe and Africa have given India an edge to become a regional cargo powerhouse. Investments are being channelised

into developing multimodal logistics corridors, inland water transport and dedicated freight corridors (DFCs) to capitalise on this advantage.

The global push for China+1 strategies is giving pace for transfer of manufacturing plants to India, which resulted in demand for reliable, scalable and cost-efficient cargo and logistics. MNCs, cargo terminal operators (CTOs) and logistics solution providers are finding new opportunities to invest in and partner with Indian players to cater to this fast-growing movement of goods.

Situated between the East and the West, India serves as a natural bridge for

Highlights

- India's proximity to growing consumer markets in Southeast Asia along with trade routes to Europe and Africa give it an edge to become a regional cargo powerhouse.

Impact

- Push for China+1 strategies gave pace for transfer of manufacturing plants to India, which have resulted in demand for cost-efficient logistics.



global cargo flows, especially across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. With access to 7,500 km of coastline, 13 major ports, 200 non-major ports and a rapidly developing network of airports and dry ports, India has the potential to serve as a transshipment hub and is a vital logistics gateway.

Major airports, such as Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Bengaluru, are providing best-in-class transshipment facilities. Many new regional airports operating under the Airports Authority of India are also gearing up to become cargo and logistics hubs.

Major international cargo carriers are enhancing their capacity and frequency to Indian cities. Indian airports, regional and international, are developing integrated cargo terminals, transshipment facilities and cold-chain zones. With volumes on the rise from exports and e-commerce, global cargo players are increasingly entering into

JVs and partnerships with Indian businesses.

India's economic growth is no longer confined to metros. Tier II and III cities are becoming new centres of trade, manufacturing, and consumption. This decentralised growth is expanding the need for regional cargo terminals, air freight corridors and logistics parks across the country.

PMGS, which aims to build 300 multimodal logistics parks (MMLPs) across India, has so far been successful in its target

plan. Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals for rail freight are being constructed to facilitate improved rail cargo movement. National Highways, DFCs, and SEZs are fostering growth and EoDB.

The PMGS platform ensures faster clearance and coordination across ministries, encouraging investment in logistics infrastructure. The PPP models and PLI Schemes along with NLP provide a framework for reducing logistics costs from 13 to 14 per cent of GDP to single digits, aligning the country with in-

ternational standards. These reforms give foreign investors the confidence that India is serious about becoming a world-class logistics hub.

Additionally, India's e-commerce boom has created a demand for fast, efficient and technology-driven cargo solutions. With 800 million internet users and a rising middle class, the demand for same day and next day deliveries has accelerated the growth of regional air cargo networks, express logistics and last-mile delivery, say reports. Firms, such as Amazon, DHL, FedEx, and UPS are expanding their operations and infra in India, while players, such as Delhivery, Ecom Express and Blue Dart are leveraging global investments to scale rapidly.

The e-commerce-led segment presents an opportunity for foreign investors, logistics startups and platform enablers to enter or expand within the country's dynamic supply chain ecosystem. Digitisation and automation are creat-

ROAD AHEAD

- ➔ **Tier II and III cities are becoming new centres of trade, manufacturing and consumption. This decentralised growth is expanding the need for regional cargo terminals, air freight corridors and logistics parks across the country.**
- ➔ **Major airports, such as Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, are already providing best-in-class transshipment facilities. Many new regional airports are also gearing up to become cargo and logistics hubs.**



ing opportunities for global technology providers. From AI-powered warehouse management systems and cargo tracking tools to IoT-enabled fleet monitoring and paperless customs clearance, the shift toward smart logistics is unlocking new investment avenues.

Sustainability is steadily becoming a key priority. The public and private sectors are investing in EV fleets, solar-powered warehouses, green terminals and carbon-efficient cargo practices. For global investors focused on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) metrics, India's evolving green logistics landscape offers compelling reasons to invest.

Several logistics giants have announced multi-million-dollar investments in India. For instance, DP World, Maersk and Amazon are investing in inland container depots, fulfilment centres and cargo terminals. According to experts, sovereign wealth funds, private equity firms and institutional investors are betting on India's cargo in-

frastructure as a long-term, high-yield opportunity. For global companies, this means that India offers not just one but multiple high-growth cargo markets.


Regional airports are being upgraded with air cargo handling capabilities and states are launching their own logistics policies to attract investment. The opportunity to scale air cargo networks in emerging cities is drawing attention from foreign as well as domestic investors. India's large, young and tech-savvy workforce is another asset. With a pool of logistics professionals, IT engineers and supply chain specialists, India provides the human capital needed to operate modern cargo systems.

In parallel, India's vibrant technology startup ecosystem is driving innovation in freight booking, route optimisation, cargo finance and predictive logistics. This creates multiple synergies for global investors who can find a market and a partner ecosystem for collaborative growth. India's cargo growth story is not

just about numbers — it is about momentum, reform and long-term strategic advantage. From policymakers and private investors to global corporations and startups, everyone has a role in shaping India into a major global

“The opportunity to scale cargo networks in emerging cities is drawing attention from foreign as well as domestic investors.”

cargo hub. With the right investments, partnerships and continued policy support, India is positioned to lead the next decade of growth in cargo and logistics — not just for itself, but as a key driver in the international supply chain network.

 speaks to logistics experts on the opportunities that lie ahead and if India is the right choice for foreign investors?

India has access to key international routes

“India's logistics market is more attractive as compared to Southeast Asia. Valued at over US\$ 400 billion, it is projected to grow due to rising e-commerce, infra development, PMGS and NLP. India's geographic location offers strategic access to key global trade routes, while investments in MMLPs, DFCs and digital logistics platforms enhance efficiency. India offers a larger domestic market and lower labour costs. Even though Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia often score higher in EoDB, India's long-term potential remains strong — making India a favourable logistics hub with room for improvement.”



Keku Bomi Gazder
MD & CEO
Aviapro Logistic Services

Investments in MMLPs, DFCs & tech enhancing efficiency & growth

Air, rail, road infra improve connectivity

“The air cargo sector is being seen as a lucrative bet for freight operators and other stakeholders. In 2023–2024, India saw a 7 per cent YoY rise in volumes handled by Indian airports, while global loads spiked by 10 per cent. Not only air, as far as road and rail infra are concerned, expressways and highways are reducing transport time and improving connectivity. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari recently stated that within two years, India's road infrastructure will be comparable to that of the USA. The DFCs are also an effort to increase rail freight share and leverage rail network to lower logistics costs.”



Afzal Malbarwala
Managing Director
Galaxy Freight

National Highways are reducing transport time and improving connectivity

India becoming logistically competitive

“India has scale in terms of consumption and production. Unlike many Southeast Asian markets, India offers a broader cargo basket. With Make in India, PMGS and investments in multimodal connectivity, India is becoming logistically competitive. From a GSA perspective, we see a long-term commitment from global carriers to India. Though it has geographical advantages, especially for South Asia, Middle East and East Africa flows, we need more than location to become a transshipment hub. What is needed is more coordination between customs, airport authorities and carriers.”



Prithviraj Singh Chug
Chief Executive Officer
Group Concorde

Coordination between customs, airport authorities & carriers vital

India must overcome logistical bottlenecks

“India’s goal to reduce logistics costs to under 10 per cent of GDP is facilitated by reforms such as the NLP, which seeks to streamline processes and improve efficiency. The country’s digital transformation, highlighted by ULIP, offers real-time cargo tracking, and enhanced transparency. Challenges such as customs processes, regulatory fragmentation and logistical bottlenecks remain, while Southeast Asian nations such as Singapore and Malaysia have progressed by leaps and bounds.

Despite these challenges, India’s expanding infra investments position it to outpace its competitors in the long run.”



Ramanathan Rajamani
Chief Executive Officer
AISATS

ULIP offers real-time cargo tracking and enhanced end to end transparency



Policies & PPP to make India an international hub

“To unlock India’s advantage, infrastructure enhancement and regulatory simplification is must. China has built the most efficient logistics networks over the past two decades. Logistics thrives as a core economic activity in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand have taken after their successful neighbours. India may have joined the race late, but it has the scale, demographic dividend and domestic demand that many of its peers lack. With focus, coherent policy implementation and PPP, India has the capacity to emerge as an international logistics hub.”



Arun Kumar
President
AMTOI

India has scale, demographic dividend & domestic demand

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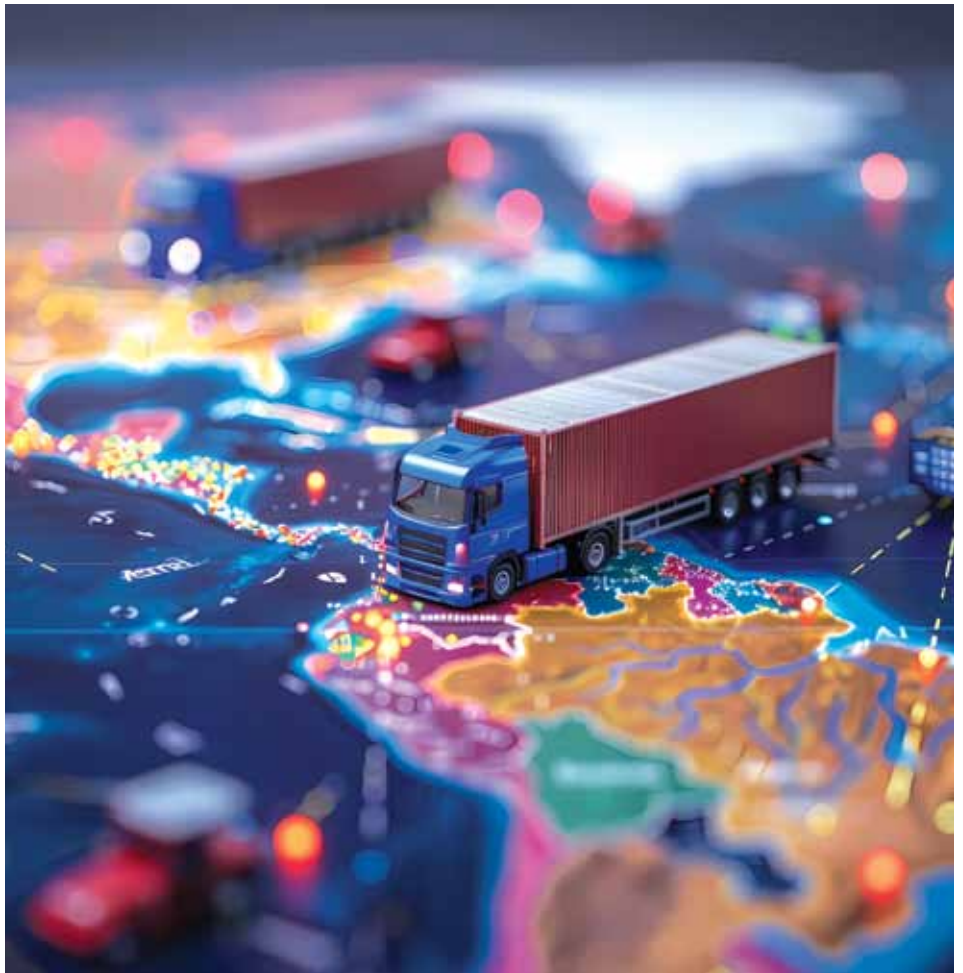
Chinese firms eyeing India to relocate

“We are witnessing an uptick in logistics demand as many companies are diversifying from manufacturing in China. With a massive consumer market and skilled labour, India is becoming the go-to hub for sectors such as electronics, pharma and automobiles. Initiatives such as PLI Scheme and the ongoing port infra upgrades are also fuelling this growth. Recent reports show more companies are eyeing India for relocation compared to other nations. The China+1 strategy is a golden chance for the country to cement its role in international supply chains, and we are thrilled to be part of this dynamic shift.”



Amit Tandon
CEO & MD
Asia Shipping

The China+1 strategy is a golden chance for the country to cement its role as a hub



India logistics hub for domestic needs

“As global companies look to diversify beyond China, India is emerging as a strong alternative due to initiatives such as Make in India and PLI that encourage domestic production and invite investment. Our skilled labour is set to meet the demands and is more accessible than that of other countries. This makes India appealing to sectors that need specialised professionals. Enhanced port facilities, industrial corridors and SEZs have made exporting from India efficient. These factors position India as a logistics hub for domestic needs and a compelling gateway for global trade.”



Prediman Koul
Chief Executive Officer
Jeena & Company

Industrial corridors & SEZs have made exporting from India efficient



Country stands out for consumer-driven economy

“Global companies are diversifying their manufacturing and sourcing bases across Asia due to ever-evolving geo-political developments. As a result, countries such as India, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia are being integrated deeply into global value chains. Each location offers advantages, whether in terms of cost, infra, trade pacts or workforce capabilities. India is positioning itself as a reliable long-term partner in automotive, pharma, textiles, garments and electronics. While Southeast Asia has witnessed traction due to existing trade ties, India's investment in infra is creating long-term advantages.”



Huned Gandhi
MD, Air and Sea Logistics
Dachser India

India is a reliable partner in auto, pharma, textiles and garments

Happy Parsi new year



Humātā
Good Thoughts

Hukhtā
Good Words

Hvarshtā
Good Deeds

Logistics & MSMEs face barriers in adopting tech



Key challenges to adopting technology include high upfront costs, limited digital literacy and lack of skilled workforce. Many small businesses operate with legacy systems and informal processes, making integration of new technologies risky. Concerns about ROI, cybersecurity and potential disruptions contribute to the cautious approach. Without targeted support, the pace of technology adoption remains slow and uneven.



Ritika Arora Bhola

Considering the plethora of benefits technology offers to streamline logistics and supply chain operations, the logistics sector is still under pressure to digitise, especially MSMEs, who are hesitant to adopt technology due to reasons such as high-cost, traditional mindset, lack of knowledge and constant investments and upgradations.

This reluctance stems from economic, cultural and infrastructural factors that continue to shape the sector's approach. AI, IoT, Blockchain, ML, Data Science, robotics and automation have transformed the way the logistics sector operates and improved EoDB in India.

The Ukraine-Russia war, Iran-Israel conflict and global slowdown have made it mandatory for the logistics firms to invest in technology to survive. From AI-driven route optimisation in multimodal logistics to robotics in warehouses and real-time shipment tracking through IoT are reshaping global supply chains.

The past few years have witnessed the emergence of tech-startups offering performance-based apps for air cargo and logistics sectors. Several logistics players, including MSMEs, remain hesitant in adopting these solutions in tier II and III cities.

COST BARRIER

One of the primary reasons MSMEs in logistics shy away

“The cost of upskilling, maintaining systems and ensuring periodic upgrades adds to the overall financial burden for MSMEs.”

from adopting technologies is the high cost of implementation, according to reports. Systems such as warehouse automation, WMS, AI analytics tools, Block Chain for supply chain transparency, advanced transportation management software and GPS, require upfront investment. For large logistics corporations, these costs may be justified by long-term gains in efficiency and

productivity. For MSMEs operating on thin profit margins, such investments seem risky or unaffordable. Even the cost of upskilling, maintaining the systems and ensuring periodic upgrades add to the overall financial burden.

UPSKILLING — A CHALLENGE

In India, most of the workforce is still not tech-savvy. The sector is not ready with skilled workforce who can understand and manage technologies. There is a need to promote skilling and to understand the importance of digitalisation. Govt and private players have opened various institutions such as the National Skill Development Council and Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya across India to



encourage youth to enter the sector. But it will take time for India to boost digital literacy. Many logistics MSMEs are run by first or second-generation entrepreneurs who are not equipped to evaluate new age technology solutions. This digital knowledge gap leads to hesitation in adopting systems when it does not promise immediate benefits.

UNORGANISED MARKET STRUCTURE

In countries such as India, the sector is fragmented, comprising thousands of small players many of whom function in an unorganised or semi-organised manner. These businesses often operate with minimal documentation, limited digital infrastructure and traditional business models based on trust and familiarity rather than data and automation.

Such businesses are usually not ready or unwilling to take the leap toward high-tech solutions. Integrating digital tools into unstructured workflows is often seen as a disruption rather than an enhancement.

UNCERTAIN ROI

MSMEs are inherently risk-averse to logistics where the returns on digital investments are not immediate. Advanced technologies may offer long-term benefits, but the lack of short-term ROI makes business owners sceptical.

Another challenge is that small operators do not consider improved customer experience, data-driven decisions or process transparency critical priorities. For them, survival, cash flow and daily operations take precedence over transformation efforts for them.

Introducing new systems requires overhauling existing processes, which can lead

to temporary disruptions in service. For MSMEs, a delay can have a cascading impact on customer relationships and revenue flow. The fear of such disruptions deters many from embracing change, when they are managing operations well enough using manual or semi-digital methods.

RESISTANCE

In India, cultural inertia is an underrated barrier. Traditionally, logistics has been a people-driven business where personal networks, experience and intuition play a vital role. Changing that mindset to one where data and automation take centre stage is a slow and difficult process. Without a generational shift,

many prefer sticking to what they know best — even if it is less efficient.

CYBERSECURITY

Concerns regarding data privacy and cybersecurity have grown. MSMEs often lack the expertise to understand or mitigate these risks. The fear of data breaches, system hacks or losing sensitive business information prevents many from going fully digital.

LIMITED ECOSYSTEM

While governments and industry associations have launched programmes to support digital transformation, many MSMEs find these schemes inaccessible or generic.

The government has launched many digital initiatives, such as ULIP, LDB, Digital Public Infrastructure, National Logistics e-marketplace, FASTag and Freight Greenhouse Gas Calculator. But without tailored support, financial incentives or handholding, small logistics businesses find it quite challenging to take the first step.

Highlights

- SMEs do not consider improved customer experience, data-driven decisions or process transparency critical priorities.

Impact

- The fear of data breaches, system hacks or losing information prevents MSMEs from going fully digital. They lack expertise to understand these risks.

Shortage of talent to manage solutions

“Despite the buzz around AI and IoT in the logistics sector — including MSMEs, the barrier in embracing technology is not just costs, but perceived costs. MSMEs fear high upfront investment without ROI, overlooking long-term gains such as process efficiency, visibility or data-driven decision-making. The industry’s fragmented nature and legacy mindset slow down adoption. Many still use disconnected systems for operations, billing and compliance, leading to revenue leakage and inefficiencies. There is a knowledge gap. While owners often lack exposure to emerging technology, there is a shortage of skilled talent to manage the solutions.”



Amit Maheshwari
Founder and CEO
Softlink Global

MSMEs fear high upfront investment without ROI & overlook long-term gains



Fear of losing control makes MSMEs wary

“Discussions around tech adoption in the logistics sector, especially MSMEs, revolve around cost and capability. There lies the human barrier — the fear of losing control. Decisions are made not by data dashboards, but by people who know their trade inside out. In such environments, introducing tech doesn’t feel empowering, but like abject surrender. If a machine is calling the shots, what happens to the wisdom of decades? This hesitation is amplified by a fragmented supply chain, ROI and outdated legacy systems and leaves many caught in the day-to-day grind of prioritising survival over transformation.”



Balagopal Balachandran
National Head, Air Freight
FEI Cargo

ROI and outdated systems hinder growth and tech adoption for MSMEs

Contd. on next page ►

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MSMEs shy away from adopting tech due to costs

“ The MSME sector is realising the benefits of advanced tech, but adoption remains cautious due to several barriers. High investment, uncertainty over tangible ROI and integration challenges with legacy systems deter many players. MSMEs operate on tight profit margins and view technology as a cost rather than an enabler. MSMEs seek quick benefits from technology adoption. Our solutions such as Cargo Community System, iCAFFE, SEZ compliance and Wise-Fleet are designed to be affordable, scalable and to demonstrate ROI early by improving efficiency, reducing errors and costs.”



Parvinder Singh
Managing Director
Hans Informatic

MSMEs are aware of the benefits of technology, but are slow in adopting it

Fear of operational disruptions a deterrent

“ MSMEs encounter regulatory uncertainty and fear operational disruptions during technology transitions. Resistance to change among stakeholders slows adoption. High investment costs for AI, IoT or Blockchain makes MSMEs cautious. With tight margins, these firms seek quick returns, but the longer payback period for tech investments deters decision-making, especially without clear visibility on tangible benefits. There is a gap in digital literacy within MSMEs. Limited in-house expertise, coupled with shortage of industry-specific training programmes, constraints their ability to adopt tech.”



Vipin Vohra
Chairman
Continental Carriers

There is a gap in digital literacy in MSMEs due to longer payback period

High initial investment needed for tech adoption

“ The barrier which we see with MSMEs on adopting AI, IoT and Blockchain is high-cost investment as they might not have sufficient allocations on their budget to implement and maintain it. Data integration from existing systems might be another challenge. MSMEs are comfortable with the process they are using. High initial investments are required for tech adoption by hiring skilled talent for implementation. But in the long run, this helps reduce manual work, making the process easy through automation and improving customer satisfaction, proportionate to ROI.”



Gautham R
Senior Manager, Global Air
Freight Head, Air Freight
India, WIZ

Data integration from existing systems might be another challenge

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MSMEs don't adopt tech owing to short-term ROI

“Many MSMEs and logistics players hesitate to adopt technology due to the misconception that tech is expensive and will eliminate jobs. They also prefer to wait for larger companies to adopt and validate new technologies, positioning themselves as late adopters. MSMEs often perceive tech as a high upfront cost without immediate ROI. This short-term view delays adoption — though many modern solutions offer affordable and service-based models. Today's technologies are user-friendly and designed for quick adoption. The issue lies more in mindset than in skills.”



Sabari Ramnath
Director
Unisys

They perceive tech as high upfront cost without ROI. This delays adoption



Survival and cost control barrier in tech adoption

“Infra implementation and training costs are steep with payoffs that may take years. This high entry cost fuels perceptions of risk and delays investment. If technology can automate documentation and other processes to minimise human intervention, it could reduce expenses and make costs affordable. Owners and mid-level managers often lack exposure to AI, IoT, or blockchain, while trained staff is scarce and expensive. MSMEs prioritise short-term survival and cost control. Without immediate gains, they hesitate to allocate capital. There are pronounced knowledge gaps and skill shortages in logistics.”



Rajen Bhatia
Chairman, ACAAI
Western Region

There are pronounced knowledge gaps and skill shortages in logistics

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VLA and ACAAI to boost India-Vietnam EXIM trade

India and Vietnam have longstanding bilateral trade ties, which grew to US\$ 15.76 billion in March 2025. India is a key market for pharma, agri produce, textiles, chemicals and logistics, say **Nguyen Duy Minh**, VP, VLA, and **Dinesh Krishnan**, Chairman, ACAAI Southern Region, during a virtual meet.



CT Bureau

Ahead of the forthcoming FIATA World Congress scheduled to be held from October 6 to 10 in Hanoi, Vietnam Logistics Business Association (VLA) held a virtual session focusing on 'B2B Matching Online Towards FIATA World Congress 2025', with the purpose of linking businesses and creating new opportunities for VLA



members and global partners. The ACAAI was invited to discuss opportunities for expansion and cooperation of members on both sides, contributing to promoting trade between Vietnam and India.

"India is currently one of Vietnam's top economic part-

ners. Bilateral trade between Vietnam and India has grown from US\$ 200 million in 2000 to US\$ 15.76 billion in March 2025. India is a key market for sectors such as pharma, farm products, textiles, chemicals, logistics and supply chain services. Vietnam is becoming an important manufacturing and investment destination for Indian enterprises. There is an interest from Indian firms to enhance their footprint in Vietnam, particularly in logistics infrastructure, port development and cold chain logistics, remarked **Nguyen Duy Minh**, Vice President, VLA.

"India and Vietnam have longstanding trade and economic ties. In 2024-25, Vietnam became India's 20th largest trading partner and 15th largest export destination globally. India is Vietnam's eight largest trading partner, seventh largest export market and 10th largest import source. In 2024-25, frozen bovine meat, fishery products, machinery and equipment, electrical equipment, auto components,



Nguyen Duy Minh
Vice President, Vietnam Logistics
Business Association (VLA)



Dinesh Krishnan
Chairman
ACAAI Southern Region

“There is an interest from Indian firms to expand network in Vietnam in logistics infra, port development & cold chain logistics.”

“In 2024-25, Vietnam became India's 20th largest trading partner and 15th largest export destination internationally.”

pharma, API, chemicals, ordinary metals, cereal, cotton, animal fodder and gems & jewellery were exported to Vietnam,” said **Dinesh Krishnan**, Chairman, ACAAI Southern Region.

“Imports from Vietnam included electronic equipment, telecom equipment, machinery and mechanical appliances, iron and steel, ordinary metals, chemicals, articles of plastic, products of steel, footwear, garments, textile materials, wood, rubber and coffee, among others,” he added.

“During the visit of Prime Minister **Pham Minh Chinh** to India in July 2024, the leaders of both nations agreed to set the target of increasing bilateral trade to US\$ 20 billion.

To achieve this goal, developing logistics infra and improving freight transport between the two countries will be a decisive factor,” averred **Bui Trung Thuong**, Trade Counsellor of Vietnam in India.

“As the Trade Counsellor of Vietnam in India, I place emphasis on the development of logistics — a lifeline in promoting bilateral trade. Logistics is no longer a support service but has become a driver of national and regional competitiveness,” he added.

Vietnam is working with the global trade and transport community to solve the problem of sustainable development in today's volatile world through digital and green transformation.



Technology crucial to navigate disruptions in air cargo sector

Tech will play a pivotal role in managing increasing cargo volumes and navigating geopolitical complexities. With trade lanes shifting and supply chains facing disruptions, digital platforms will evolve from operational enablers to strategic decision-making tools, says **Vineet Malhotra, Co-Founder & Director, Kale Logistics Solutions.**

How do you support traditional cargo handlers or airports with limited tech infra?

Kale's suite of digital solutions come with no initial investment. Hence, cargo handlers and airports can leverage the infra and scale up digitalisation in their ecosystem. By doing so, they achieve higher operational efficiency and better resource allocation. So far, 100 airport cargo stations worldwide are engaging with Kale's IT solution. We offer modular cargo community system as per needs so that the system is fully utilised. It is topped with value added services to support community engagement and tech adoption.

How do you tailor your tech to meet regulatory and operational needs across global markets?

Kale's digital offerings are designed with flexibility and adaptability at its core to meet diverse regulatory and operational needs across global markets. We achieve this by building modular and configurable platforms that can seamlessly align with country-specific regulations, customs protocols and industry standards such as IATA, WCO and UN/CEFACT.

We work closely with local stakeholders, such as airports, ports, customs and logistics operators to incorporate regional compliance needs directly into our solutions. For instance, our Airport Cargo Community System (ACS) is built to accommodate unique



Vineet Malhotra
Co-Founder & Director
Kale Logistics Solutions

documentation formats, varying EDI protocols and specific trade compliance mandates of each region.

Are you working on solutions that help reduce CO2 footprint or optimise fuel efficiency?

Since inception Kale has been building its equity around sustainability driven solutions. For example, a leading airport in North America,

which is engaging with our community platforms, we witnessed 16,000 gallons of fuel saved in three quarters. Due to this, stakeholders realised cost savings and took a major leap towards achieving SDGs. Mumbai International Airport is the classic example for us to quote. Not only did the cargo dwell time reduce but the processing time of each shipment was slashed by 60 per cent. This way the airport could process more cargo than usual without expanding physically.

How do you see the role of tech evolving in response to growing volumes and geopolitical shifts?

Technology plays a pivotal role in managing increasing volumes and navigating geopolitical complexities. With trade lanes shifting and supply chains facing disruptions, digital platforms will evolve from operational enablers to decision-making tools.

Technologies such as AI, predictive analytics, blockchain and IoT will enhance real-time visibility, automate workflows and mitigate risks. ACS will unify stakeholders,

“ACS is built to lodge unique documentation formats, varying EDI protocols & specific trade compliance mandates of regions.”

ensuring faster, transparent and compliant operations despite uncertainties.

Technology-driven sustainability initiatives, such as paperless documentation and optimised routing, will help the industry balance growth with environmental responsibility. In essence, tech will redefine resilience and efficiency in global logistics.



Govt must standardise and mandate timelines: AITWA

Govt must standardise the time taken for loading and unloading trucks and mandate timelines. It would be a significant step forward in improving turnaround times and reducing bottlenecks, says **Reema Jogani, Chairperson, Women's Wing, All India Transporters' Welfare Association (AITWA).**



Ritika Arora Bhola

What are the biggest challenges facing the transport sector in India?

Transporters today are burdened by challans — local and centralised — many of which impose high penalties for even minor violations. There is a need to standardise enforcement and introduce a reasonable tolerance in speed monitoring. Penalising a vehicle for clocking 43 kmph in a 40 km per hour zone with a ₹4,000 fine is unfair and counterproductive. A 10 kmph buffer could create a fairer system, while still promoting road safety.

Another long-term challenge attracting quality to the industry is — that many businesses are built with the goal of being sold or raising private equity, rather than being scaled as institutions. This short-termism often leads to a focus on margins at the expense of vision, innovation and workforce development. Endless construction work and poorly managed detours delay deliveries, damaging vehicles and increasing fuel costs.

These issues are painful for time-sensitive sectors such as pharma and perishables. Highway congestion leads to hours of unproductive vehicle time. System glitches and long queues remain common despite FASTag. Lack of rest stops, good roads, sanitation facilities and food access on key highways compounds the issue, hurting driver morale and retention.



Reema Jogani
Chairperson, Women's Wing,
All India Transporters'
Welfare Association

Toll expenses have spiralled, especially for long-distance routes. For many small and mid-sized operators, these rising costs are unsustainable when the road quality does not justify the toll amount. The non-uniform tolling systems across states make matters worse. India is also facing a severe shortage of trained commercial drivers — only 750 drivers per 1,000 trucks.

How has the rise in fuel prices, environmental regulations and infra changes impacted your members?

Transporters in India are under pressure due to rising fuel prices, stricter environmental regulations and ongoing infrastructure changes. Frequent hikes in diesel prices have impacted margins. Environmental mandates, such as the shift to BS-VI and vehicle scrap-page policies have raised fleet upgrade costs and compliance burdens. While the push for EVs is growing, limited infra and high initial investment make adoption challenging.

Infra projects — necessary for long-term growth — are a reason for delays, congestion and detours that reduce efficiency and lead to driver fatigue. Rising toll costs without matching improvements in road quality strain transporter

finances. Fuel is uncertain due to geo-political tensions, which means we end up doing business with uncertain margins to retain clientele.

“There is a growing need to standardise enforcement and introduce a reasonable tolerance in speed monitoring.”

What is AITWA's role in advocating transport policies at the state and national levels?

AITWA plays a key role in driving policy-level interventions, primarily at the central level. Our efforts are focused on engaging with the government to promote overall growth and efficiency of the



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transport and logistics sector. This includes advocacy on critical matters such as GST reforms, amendments to the Carriage by Road Act, taxation policies and other regulatory issues that impact the industry.

We recently raised concerns with the Reserve Bank of India related to the impounding of trucks by financiers, especially where these vehicles transport cargo. Such actions severely disrupt logistics operations, causing delays, financial losses and operational uncertainties for all stakeholders involved — transporters, customers and financiers.

Do you believe the government should implement policies to support transporters?

One key area where support is needed is standardising the time taken for loading and unloading trucks. If the govt mandates timelines for these processes, it would be significant in improving turn-

around times and reducing operational bottlenecks.

Another area of concern is the issuance of challans, especially for speeding or traffic violations committed by drivers. Digitising and making challans instantly accessible to drivers can serve as a valuable tool not only in raising awareness but also encouraging behavioural changes. The development of more driver rest areas along highways is essential.

How is AITWA promoting sustainability in transportation — EVs or green logistics?

The association has been contributing to sustainability initiatives in the transport sector. The association is part of the think tank at the Union Ministry of Heavy Industries and NITI Aayog, where the focus is on accelerating adoption of zero-emission trucks and promoting cleaner logistics solutions. In line with this vision, we have established

the GreenGrid Forum — a dedicated platform designed to bring together electric vehicle (EV) fleet owners, prospective adopters, technology providers and policy stakeholders.

The objective is to facilitate a smoother transition to electric mobility, address practical challenges and drive policy reforms supporting the growth of green fleets in India.

What are your top priorities as the chairperson of the association?

Unite women in the transport industry to collaborate with purpose, lead change and engage in dialogue with government bodies for impactful

advocacy. Bring more women and drivers into the system. To partner with association leaders to support industry welfare and contribute to important initiatives, including promoting recent projects and developments.

Promote unity among the transporters by encouraging collaboration and facilitating knowledge-sharing sessions equipping them with practical insights and expertise.

Another area of concern is the issuance of challans, especially for speeding or traffic violations committed by the drivers

Liaise with stakeholders to identify pressing issues, present them through appropriate association channels and advocate for their resolution at higher levels.

Support the vision of the association by aligning efforts with its core objectives and helping drive its mission forward. Championing the welfare of drivers and working towards ensuring they gain the respect and recognition they deserve.



BOTTLENECKS

- Transporters are burdened by challans — local and centralised.
- Need to standardise enforcement and introduce tolerance in speed monitoring.
- Attracting high-quality talent to the transport industry is a challenge.
- Endless construction work and managed detours delay deliveries, cause vehicle damage and increase fuel costs.
- Highway congestion, near toll plazas and city borders, leads to hours — sometimes days — of unproductive vehicle time. Even with FASTag, system glitches and long queues remain commonplace.
- Lack of rest stops, sanitation facilities and food access on highways compounds the issue, hurting driver morale and retention.
- Shortage of trained commercial drivers — there are only 750 drivers per 1,000 trucks.

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FRU: Manas International Airport

VKO: Vnukovo International Airport

DME: Moscow Domodedovo
International Airport

IST: Istanbul Airport

LED: Pulkovo Airport

GYD: Heydar Aliyev International Airport

DYU: Dushanbe International Airport

TBS: Tbilisi International Airport

SVX: Koltsovo International Airport

Many More



US tariffs may not promote trade in many lanes: Xeneta

It is difficult to relate the 6% growth in demand in May to increased e-commerce or increasing trade at a time when companies overall are becoming more conservative. The air cargo spot rates plunged by 4% year-on-year to US\$ 2.44 per kg, says **Niall van de Wouw, Chief Airfreight Officer**.



CT Bureau

While global trade continued to flow in May and cargo volumes rose 6 per cent year-on-year, market sentiment and concerns over what comes next saw air cargo spot rates decline for the first time in a year, as per Xeneta's latest market analysis.

The global air cargo market appeared to have dodged a perfect storm following the US-China 90-day tariff truce after the escalating retaliatory tariffs since April. The US administration lowered its additional tariffs on China from 145 to 30 per cent, while China responded by decreasing its tariffs on the US to 10 per cent.

This welcome news came too late to reverse a softening in rates. The air cargo spot



rate fell by 4 per cent YoY in May to US\$ 2.44 per kg — the first such plunge since April 2024. This could, in part, be attributed to 20 per cent year-on-year fall in jet fuel costs. More downward pressure may lie ahead, said Niall van

de Wouw, Chief Airfreight Officer, Xeneta.

“Market fundamentals are holding up, but the drop in rates is likely a reflection of declining sentiment and concerns, particularly among air-

The air cargo spot rate fell by 4 per cent Year on Year in May to US\$ 2.44 per kg — the first such plunge since April 2024

Global air cargo spot rate registered its first decline since April 2024



lines, over what will happen once more stability returns to international trade and there is less of a push for the security of airfreight. Whatever worse trade conditions take away from overall trade, this uncertainty gives a bit back to airfreight,” he said.

“This climate is reducing trade and air cargo is getting a temporary piggyback on this uncertainty through an increase in emergency shipments but that will not continue. It is difficult to relate the 6 per cent growth in demand in May to increased e-commerce or increasing trade at a time when companies overall are becoming more conservative,”

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CARGO MARKET SIZE SHARE

(Central Asia, 2024, estimated)

Kyrgyz-
stan

Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan

48,3% Kazakhstan

31,7% Uzbekistan

9,3%

10,7%



The overall trend in recent months shows rates on a downward trajectory and there is room for more decline for a longer period

van de Wouw said. The slower growth in cargo volumes and rates over the past five to six months, he said, reflected growing sentiment “that it does not look good for trade”.

“At the moment, the climate might be positive on certain lanes to air freight demand, but there will be a time when there is an agreement on tariffs — and I do not expect the end result to promote trade and will, therefore, hamper air freight.”

RATES IN DECLINE

“More visibility and clarity in the market will not benefit air freight, in my opinion. We have seen short upticks in rates, but the overall trend in recent months shows rates on a downward trajectory, and

I think there is room for more decline for a longer period. The sentiment over what is coming is reflected in falling rates,” Van de Wouw continued.

Airlines, he felt, will be trying to hold on to their volumes in this uncertain environment and willing to “pay a bit more” for that security.”

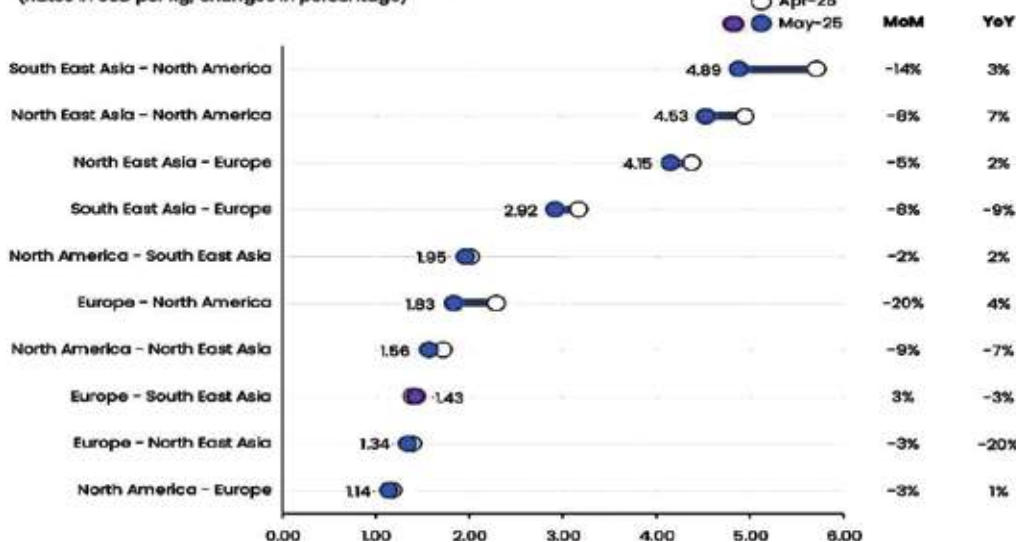
“The ‘fear of missing out’ (FOMO) may well be back this year, if the balance changes a little bit, it can have a much bigger impact,” he said. “So, the moment flights become

less full, airlines might just want to settle their rate negotiations quicker — and I think we are seeing that starting to play out in the negotiation of rates at a global level.”

Just a few weeks on, calm has returned to the market. The USA has lowered tariffs on Chinese and Hong Kong low-value e-commerce shipments to 54 per cent or a flat fee of US\$ 100 for parcel shipments. Cross-border e-commerce giants, such as Temu and Shein, however, are likely to face the general 30 per cent tariffs as they prefer to use commercial airlines to ferry air cargo for last-mile deliveries. This indicates they may still retain a competitive advantage if the incremental taxes are between 40 and 50 per cent, as per Xeneta analysis. For the air cargo industry, a lot is riding on the outcome. E-commerce volumes accounted for about 50 per cent of China to US cargo volumes.

Air cargo spot rates fell month-on-month on most routes following US tariff truce

Air cargo spot rate developments for selected global corridors, May 2025
(Rates in USD per kg; changes in percentage)



Source: Xeneta

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ FOMO may well be back this year, if the balance changes a little bit, it can have a much bigger impact.
- ➔ E-commerce volumes accounted for 50% of China to US cargo volume.

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Hyderabad airport to get cargo terminal II by 2026

Construction of cargo terminal II will increase the overall handling capacity to 350,000 MT. At Hyderabad airport, 65 to 70% of exports are pharma. Engineering goods, electronics, perishables and textiles have also increased, says **Pradeep Panicker**, CEO, GMR Hyderabad International Airport.



CT Bureau

What is the current cargo handling capacity of the airport?

The existing cargo terminal I (CT1) can handle 150,000 MT per year. The current cargo infrastructure at Hyderabad is undergoing expansion to meet growing demand. CT1 is being upgraded to more than double the existing capacity and, upon completion, will feature a state-of-the-art domestic terminal, an international courier/express terminal and a dedicated export perishables terminal for enhancing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Construction of the new terminal II is in progress, substantially increasing overall handling cargo capacity to 350,000 MT by the end of FY26.

How do you manage aircraft parking and TATs for freighters?

For operators seeking swift specialised handling and cost efficiency, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport has emerged as a reliable and flexible gateway for freighter operations. With dedicated freighter bays located adjacent to the cargo terminal, operators benefit from minimal taxi times and quick unloading.

The airport supports flexible slot allocations, making it ideal for ad-hoc and time-critical aircraft operations. It boasts of two code-F Freighter Bays adjacent to the terminal for expedient transfer of goods between terminal and aircraft. With freighter opera-



Pradeep Panicker
CEO, GMR Hyderabad
International Airport (GHIAL)

tors deploying aircraft such as B777 and A330Fs are aided by skilled ground handlers and have the facilities for handling cargo from multiple locations.

How efficiently is cargo moved in the bellies of pax aircraft?

Cargo movement through bellies of pax aircraft is managed efficiently through well-aligned terminal processes

“In 2024–2025, GHIAL has grown by 16% year-on-year, the fastest growing airport terminal among major metro cities.”

and coordination with ground handlers. In FY25 the total ATMs handled were 1,96,000 with 12 per cent year-on-year increase in belly capacity. We are open to discussions with the carriers on route development or upgauging opportunities based on evolving air cargo demand.

What are the annual volumes handled in the past three to five years?

In FY25, the company handled over 1.25 MMTs of air cargo, accounting for 34 per cent of the nation's total air

cargo volume, as per Airports Authority of India (AAI). This market share underscores GMR's role as a gateway for India, enabling seamless global connectivity. This success is driven by investments in areas such as safety, global air network expansion, technology, digital agility and environmentally sustainable operations. These initiatives have translated into YoY growth of 11 per cent, outperforming the national average of 10.5 per cent, according to AAI. In FY2024–2025, GHIAL has grown by 16 per cent year-on-year, which is the fastest growing airport terminal among major metro cities. GHIAL handled 182,000 MT cargo in FY24–25 at a CAGR of 9 per cent.

What percentage of cargo is handled on freighters and bellies?

In international cargo, 35 to 40 per cent of cargo is handled on freighters, while 60 to 65 per



cent is handled in bellies of pax flights.

Which are the top commodities transported through the airport?

Hyderabad Airport, being the pharma hub, handles 65 to 70 per cent of exports. In the past couple of years, we have started exporting engineering goods and electronics, perishables and textiles as

GHIAL will strengthen its role as a premier logistics gateway for South & Central India by handling pharma and perishables

well. This has increased our market share. Engineering goods and electronics are also being imported following a boom in electronics and aerospace industries,

Tell us about the infra at GHIAL for cargo handling and movement.

GHIAL continues to strengthen its role as a premier logistics gateway for South and Central India, with a focus on sectors such as pharma, perishables and electronics. The airport's cargo facilities are WHO-GDP certified, positioning it as a hub for temperature-sensitive cargo. GHIAL's infrastructure meets global standards,



including RA3 validation under EU security norms, IATA e-Freight compliance and certifications for ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management), ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management) and ISO 45001:2018 (Occupational Health and Safety).

Safety and security are reinforced through IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO), Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA) and CTPAT (Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism) certifications. All export touchpoints such as X-ray screening, racking, ULD/pallet build-up, and storage areas are temperature-controlled with multiple zones, ensuring the integrity of sensitive shipments. A cool dolly facility is available for airside



transport, preventing temperature excursions during movement from terminal to aircraft. A dedicated 5,000 sqm yard for Cooltainers supports storage and maintenance.

Hyderabad airport is planning to develop an irradiation facility on the city outskirts to enable export of perishables. By collaborating with regulatory authorities, GHIAL is working to ensure smoother flow of cargo, aligning with India's broader air cargo growth aspirations.

Is there an on-airport industrial zone to support cargo ops? Do you support AFSs?

GMR Aero-Cargo & Logistics, is integrating with the cargo business and creating value for customers. With this philosophy, various initiatives have been taken. The infra

is designed to support cargo ops, featuring an 8-lakh sq. ft., Grade A warehouse, which is leased to Amazon. Also, a 17-lakh sq. ft. Grade A Logistics Park is operational and caters to a range of logistics needs. In terms of AFSs, GHIAL continues to explore innovative models of cargo facilitation aligned with evolving policy frameworks.

Is smart tech used in your cargo terminals?

Our airport cargo terminal is equipped with IoT sensors to ensure cold-chain integrity. The cargo terminal introduced temperature-controlled cool dollies (multi-ULD trolleys) that ferry vaccine, pharma and perishable consignments from terminal to aircraft. Inside the dedicated pharma zone, dozens of sensors and data loggers record interior and ambient temperatures. 📡

HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ Pharma accounts for 68% of Hyderabad airport's tonnage. Perishables, such as fruits and vegetables, are gaining significant traction.
- ➔ National exports of perishables rose by 30.7%, while Hyderabad Air Cargo experienced 58% growth in this segment. It now makes up 10% of the airport's total cargo tonnage.
- ➔ On the domestic front, shifting intra-Asia trade dynamics and regional connectivity are accelerating cargo flows.
- ➔ With the Asia-Pacific region reporting a 9.3% YoY growth, Hyderabad Airport registered a 16% overall increase in tonnage.

Delhi to be global logistics hub with Cargo City and SEZ

Cargo City is planned to be a 50-acre integrated development comprising warehouses, express warehouses, SEZs supporting offices and amenities blocks. DIAL is currently in process of selecting a concessionaire through a competitive bidding process for the project, says an official spokesperson.



CT Bureau

Tell us about the upcoming Cargo City and SEZs at Delhi airport?

The vision of creating the Cargo City and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) emanates from a larger vision of making Delhi airport a global airport hub with the passenger and cargo segments complementing each other. This thought is also aligned with the overarching vision of the Union government to create airport hubs in the country.

What is the status of the project and what are the timelines set for various phases?

As an airport operator, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) conceptualised the project some time ago. DIAL is currently in the process of selecting the concessionaire

through a competitive bidding process for the development, financing and operations of the Cargo City project. The concession is likely to be awarded in Q2 of 2025–26. We expect the first phase of development to be operationalised as early as Q1 of 2027–28. We believe that if we expedite infrastructure delivery, it will expedite the growth of the industry.

What is the total planned area of the Cargo City and SEZs?

The Cargo City is planned to be a 50-acre integrated development comprising warehouses, express warehouses, SEZs supporting offices and amenities blocks.

How does the Cargo City and SEZs project align with and support govt programmes?

The Cargo City project will help bring cargo activities

right to the airport, thereby reducing logistics costs. This is in line with the National Logistics Policy (NLP) launched by the Prime Minister of India.

DIAL is working towards bringing in the concept of a cargo SEZ on the lines of those in Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong

Reduced costs will enhance the competitiveness of domestic products in the global market, thereby giving a boost to the 'Make in India' initiative.

What kind of infrastructure can we expect at Cargo City?

When we talk about creating a cargo hub, it needs in-

frastructure available in tier I cargo terminals, tier II and tier III, which are SEZs. Delhi airport has taken steps to build tier I capacity of 1.8 million metric tonnes (MMT) per annum, and tier II capacity of 0.5 million square feet.

DIAL is also working towards bringing in the concept of a cargo SEZ — the first in the country — along the lines of those present at international hubs such as Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong and Incheon. This tier III infrastructure will provide a comprehensive solution for the Delhi airport to function as an international aviation hub. We are building the city with this particular concept in mind.





Could you elaborate on the rules governing the cargo SEZ?

The upcoming infra envisioned as a cargo SEZ is suited for carrying out value-added activities. They include electronic repairs and refurbishments, kitting, labelling and packaging, as opposed to traditional manufacturing SEZs suited for such as heavy manufacturing and assembly

lines. The SEZs are being developed under the aegis of the SEZ Act, 2005, and as such all benefits allowed under the policy will be available to the unit holders.

For instance, the SEZ area is designated as a deemed foreign territory, thereby making all imports into this zone duty-free. We would like to highlight the development of SEZ at the airport, which is

subject to approvals. DIAL has applied for the approvals, and they are awaited.

What steps are being taken to streamline documentation and customs to ensure efficiency and EoDB?

The SEZs have a provision to enhance EoDB. We are confident that with regulatory authorities, including customs,

extending all facilitation, having designated areas at the airport to boost air cargo will ensure efficiency in EoDB.

Are there any plans for dedicated cargo corridors or logistics parks to support this ecosystem?

One of the site locations is situated right next to an existing railway corridor, and we are enhancing its access to the national highway network and providing it with excellent multimodal connectivity. The other site is located on the approach road to Terminal III, offering immediate connectivity to National Highway 48. A dedicated four-lane road connecting the cargo area in the central zone up to NH-48 has also been created.

FAST FACTS

- ➔ Phase 1 of Cargo City is likely to be operational in Q1 of 2027-28.
- ➔ The upcoming infra envisioned as a cargo SEZ is suited for carrying out electronic repairs, kitting & labelling and packaging.



Hike in engineering exports in June 2025

Trade: Export

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Million USD				% Change	
		JUN'24	APR'24-JUN'24	JUN'25	APR'25-JUN'25	JUN'25	APR'25-JUN'25
1	Tea	62.76	187.38	83.24	218.95	32.64	16.84
2	Coffee	196.99	519.80	184.34	588.02	-6.42	13.13
3	Rice	852.05	2808.26	859.30	2907.60	0.85	3.54
4	Other cereals	18.80	60.28	21.31	60.21	13.39	-0.11
5	Tobacco	163.60	426.86	134.26	509.19	-17.93	19.29
6	Spices	320.07	1088.89	312.85	1156.44	-2.26	6.20
7	Cashew	25.52	68.63	23.21	62.11	-9.02	-9.50
8	Oil meals	84.49	330.69	76.90	290.22	-8.99	-12.24
9	Oil seeds	109.69	332.22	96.43	306.03	-12.09	-7.88
10	Fruits & vegetables	250.17	843.51	257.26	951.68	2.83	12.82
11	Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items	248.22	763.99	268.30	798.08	8.09	4.46
12	Marine products	558.83	1628.87	633.30	1945.70	13.33	19.45
13	Meat, dairy & poultry products	311.54	1011.29	372.92	1187.46	19.70	17.42
14	Iron ore	246.22	660.73	126.10	417.59	-48.79	-36.80
15	Mica, coal & other ores, minerals, including processed minerals	429.68	1188.36	433.36	1356.77	0.86	14.17
16	Leather & leather products	388.93	1053.58	386.65	1088.03	-0.59	3.27
17	Ceramic products & glassware	322.47	1022.63	321.96	1031.03	-0.16	0.82
18	Gems & jewellery	2247.08	7264.65	1787.97	6664.30	-20.43	-8.26
19	Drugs & pharmaceuticals	2468.88	7202.89	2615.67	7578.19	5.95	5.21
20	Organic & inorganic chemicals	2296.58	7101.82	2334.47	7265.59	1.65	2.31
21	Engineering goods	9377.98	27894.03	9504.54	28903.72	1.35	3.62
22	Electronic goods	2822.36	8433.90	4146.79	12406.77	46.93	47.11
23	Cotton yarn/fabs./made-ups, handloom products etc.	959.78	2916.65	930.30	2860.08	-3.07	-1.94
24	Man-made yarn/fabs./made-ups e tc.	383.21	1165.42	373.41	1166.68	-2.56	0.11
25	RMG of all textiles	1293.89	3849.71	1309.76	4192.60	1.23	8.91
26	Jute mfg, including floor covering	27.39	83.30	33.81	93.70	23.44	12.49
27	Carpet	121.44	363.36	123.92	370.85	2.04	2.06
28	Handicrafts, excl. handmade carpet	133.84	407.50	130.50	398.48	-2.50	-2.21
29	Petroleum products	5489.44	20633.77	4615.75	17409.42	-15.92	-15.63
30	Plastic & linoleum	694.92	2122.24	710.66	2163.89	2.26	1.96
	Sub-Total	32906.81	103435.21	33209.25	106349.40	0.92	2.82
	GRAND TOTAL	35162.57	110057.43	35144.30	112174.54	-0.05	1.92

Note 1: Exports include Re-Exports.

Note 2: The figures for JUN 2025 are provisional. Note 3: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other

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

Petroleum imports grew in June 2025

Trade: Import

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Million USD				% Change	
		JUN'24	APR'24-JUN'24	JUN'25	APR'25-JUN'25	JUN'25	APR'25-JUN'25
1	Cotton raw & waste	70.22	152.01	73.73	262.92	5.01	72.97
2	Vegetable oil	1424.65	4215.20	1650.89	4280.88	15.88	1.56
3	Pulses	366.60	1148.58	91.78	584.35	-74.96	-49.12
4	Fruits & vegetables	241.00	720.55	275.47	796.22	14.30	10.50
5	Pulp and waste paper	181.44	492.90	155.63	483.39	-14.22	-1.93
6	Textile yarn fabric, made-up articles	209.13	557.10	206.13	619.95	-1.43	11.28
7	Fertilisers, crude & manufactured	749.85	2280.73	759.23	2099.96	1.25	-7.93
8	Sulphur & unroasted iron pyrites	21.08	32.59	28.01	125.20	32.87	284.15
9	Metaliferrous ores & other minerals	876.32	2438.63	1142.16	3043.17	30.34	24.79
10	Coal, coke & briquettes, etc.	2943.87	9331.79	2380.84	7750.61	-19.13	-16.94
11	Petroleum, crude & products	15059.53	51525.07	13798.58	49263.98	-8.37	-4.39
12	Wood & wood products	554.57	1556.19	534.35	1627.39	-3.65	4.57
13	Leather & leather products	82.72	220.79	70.42	210.35	-14.86	-4.73
14	Organic & inorganic chemicals	2475.44	7225.78	2256.13	7250.06	-8.86	0.34
15	Dyeing/tanning/colouring materials	360.27	1021.98	317.97	1015.20	-11.74	-0.66
16	Artificial resins, plastic materials, etc.	1906.20	5499.27	1858.08	5781.61	-2.52	5.13
17	Chemical material & products	957.24	2822.78	1428.51	6829.76	49.23	141.95
18	Newsprint	50.35	115.45	19.31	72.69	-61.66	-37.04
19	Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones	1811.81	5384.39	1483.68	4710.50	-18.11	-12.52
20	Iron & steel	1800.58	5069.85	1588.40	5260.00	-11.78	3.75
21	Non-ferrous metals	2308.17	6163.85	2123.99	6831.73	-7.98	10.84
22	Machine tools	446.99	1292.91	526.65	1689.36	17.82	30.66
23	Machinery, electrical & non-electrical	4081.52	12021.15	4429.79	14108.17	8.53	17.36
24	Transport equipment	2523.71	8505.58	2007.27	6974.25	-20.46	-18.00
25	Project goods	168.95	238.30	141.42	379.33	-16.29	59.18
26	Professional instrument, optical goods, among others	669.94	1941.53	728.78	2212.54	8.78	13.96
27	Electronic goods	7693.44	21890.98	8420.32	26761.67	9.45	22.25
28	Medicinal & pharmaceutical products	708.38	2155.18	708.60	2243.66	0.03	4.11
29	Gold	2476.11	8347.04	1839.08	7485.86	-25.73	-10.32
30	Silver	101.79	301.94	228.12	954.18	124.10	216.02
	Sub-Total	53321.89	164670.08	51273.34	171708.93	-3.84	4.27
	GRAND TOTAL	55997.07	172160.31	53916.80	179437.94	-3.71	4.23

Note 1: Imports include Re-Imports. Note 2: The figures for JUN 2025 are provisional.

Note 3: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other'.

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

PHDCCI Gati Se Pragati drives infrastructure synergy

The Gati Se Pragati Conclave 2025, organised by PHDCCI with Grant Thornton Bharat as its knowledge partner, was recently held in New Delhi. Shantanu Thakur, MoS, Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, was the Chief Guest, while Bibhu Prasad Tarai, BJP MP, presided over the event.





ACFI Conclave 2025 sets new global trade priorities

ACFI Conclave 2025 focused on improving air cargo resilience through innovation, sustainability and green cargo infrastructure. It also stressed upon growing express logistics and e-commerce business, cargo security and regulations. The meet witnessed great participation from industry stalwarts and policymakers.



CT Bureau

To strengthen global air cargo trade connectivity and enhance efficiency of global supply chains, the Air Cargo Forum India (ACFI) organised its annual meet with the theme 'Air Cargo Leadership in a Changing World', in New Delhi recently.

The event focused on improving air cargo resilience through innovation, sustain-

ability and green cargo infrastructure, express logistics and e-commerce acceleration, cargo security, regulations and risk management.

The event brought together industry leaders, policymakers, logistics providers and trade experts to discuss strategies for leveraging air cargo as an enabler of international commerce. With a focus on innovation, infrastructure and collaboration, the gathering

highlighted the country's significant role in driving regional and global trade through a resilient air cargo ecosystem.

Sanjiv Edward, President, ACFI, chaired the inaugural session. Piyush Srivastava, Senior Economic Adviser, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, was the Chief Guest, while Dheeraj Rastogi, Principal Commissioner of Customs, Delhi Customs, was the Guest of Honour. Other

“India is no longer a silent facilitator of global trade. The air cargo industry has emerged as an enabler of economic growth.”

participants included Arun Kumar, Honorary Secretary, ACFI, Avinash Razdan, Honorary Treasurer, Karanjit Singh Wadhwa, Chairman, ACFI Event Management, Satish Lakkaraju, Board Member, ACFI, Glyn Hughes, Director-General, TIACA and Ramesh Mami-dala, Head, Cargo Commercial, Air India.

Addressing the gathering, Edward said, “India is no longer a silent facilitator of global trade. The air cargo industry has emerged as an enabler of economic growth. India's ambition in logistics has shifted from incremental change to leapfrogging to the future. The country is



on the right trajectory and moving towards achieving 10 MMT in 2030. Together let us rise to this moment, when air cargo soars, India roars. And when India awakens, the world looks upon us.”

Rastogi emphasised the need to ensure compliance with a host of laws governing goods entering or exiting India, speedily and efficiently. Measures should be taken to protect the country from unlawful intrusions into cargo.

“The strategy in the past decade had been to automate most of the tasks in the chain. The process started with digitalisation and graduated into integration of stakeholders. The emergence of SWIFT, followed by eSANCHIT and the development of the risk management system ensured that we focused on non-compliance and facilitated the trade,” he said.

Srivastava said with the notable progress happening in the sector, India can achieve its dream of achieving 10 MMT by 2030.

ACFI and ASCELA Insights also released the knowledge paper ‘India’s Air Cargo Horizon — Seizing Global Reroutes, Regional Dominance and Resilience’, unveiling a transformative vision to position India as a global air cargo hub.

ACFI and TIACA signed an agreement to foster inno-



vation and resilience in the air cargo sector.

The sessions focused on Indian air cargo rise in the new world order, technology-driven cargo accelerating express business, e-commerce and data-led operations, building the next-gen cargo

ecosystem in Viksit Bharat 2047, green corridors and sustainable trade and cargo safety and compliance.

The event reinforced the role of air cargo in accelerating global trade and economic growth. The discussions, collaborations and a shared vision

for the future paved the way for actionable steps to modernise infrastructure, streamline logistics and enhance connectivity. As India positions itself as a vital global trade hub, the outcomes of this event are likely to drive progress across the air cargo and logistics sectors in the years to come.



Contd. on next page ►

ACFI meet discusses pros and cons of air cargo industry

The conclave was a perfect setting for leaders of air cargo and logistics industry to network and discuss new trends, especially since India opened its doors to foreign investment and the India–United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement is poised to be fully implemented in the weeks to come.



Contd. on next page ►



Sustainability critical for warehousing, MHE future

Often operating behind the scenes, MHE forms the backbone of modern warehousing and logistics operations. From facilitating the seamless movement and storage of goods to ensuring timely retrieval and dispatch, these systems enhance precision, speed and productivity across the board.



India's warehousing and logistics sector is witnessing a remarkable transformation, driven by growing demand from both global and domestic players. A recent CBRE report indicates that nearly 70 per cent of APAC-level occupiers plan to expand their warehousing footprint in India within the next two years. This heightened interest is part of a broader strategic shift among companies

to diversify supply chains and reduce dependence on single-market operations. At the core of this transformation lies an unsung enabler of industrial efficiency — Material Handling Equipment (MHE). Often operating behind the scenes, MHE forms the backbone of modern warehousing and logistics operations. From facilitating the seamless movement and storage of goods to ensuring timely retrieval and dispatch, these systems enhance precision, speed and productivity across the board. The spectrum of MHE solutions today includes conveyor systems, scanning, sorting and storage solutions, each playing a vital role in streamlining operations and optimising workflows.

The surge in sectors such as e-commerce, 3PL and manufacturing has further fuelled the demand for robust and efficient warehousing solutions, making MHE an indispensable part of the supply chain. This growth has also turned the Indian MHE market into a highly competitive arena for both domestic and international man-

“AI algorithms are employed to analyse operational data, detect anomalies and reduce downtime, making the system responsive.”

ufacturers. Increased investments in research, innovation and automation are continuously redefining the contours of the industry.

Driven by cutting-edge technologies, modern automated MHE is revolutionising industrial operations. These advanced systems can perform repetitive tasks with accuracy and enhance overall productivity by streamlining complex workflows. AI, ML and IoT integration empower MHE with predictive maintenance capabilities and real-time process optimisation. AI algorithms are employed to analyse operational data, detect anomalies and reduce downtime, making the entire system more responsive.

As warehouses evolve into high-tech hubs, manufacturers are focusing on a human-centric design. The next generation of MHE is being engineered with an emphasis on operator comfort and safety. Features such as adjustable height, intuitive digital interfaces and remote-controlled functions are making equipment more user-friendly thereby reducing the risk of operator injuries and enhancing ease of use.

Sustainability has emerged as a critical pillar in the future of MHE. Domestic and global markets are placing emphasis on energy efficiency and environmental responsibility. As a result, eco-friendly designs and green technologies are gaining widespread adoption. From electric forklifts and solar-powered charging stations to the integration of Industry 4.0 solutions, the sector is making strides toward reducing its carbon footprint. These initiatives align with global sustainability goals and provide long-term cost savings for operators.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ Electric forklifts, solar-powered charging stations, integration of Industry 4.0 solutions being introduced to reduce carbon footprint.
- ➔ AI, ML and IoT integration are empowering MHE with predictive maintenance capabilities and real-time process optimisation.
- ➔ The surge in e-commerce and third-party logistics has further fuelled the demand.



Khursheed Alam
Co-founder
Atmos Systems

(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same)

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'Managing capacity during peak season must be data-driven'

We are seeing accelerated growth of pharma, perishables, electronics, valuable cargo and leather goods, each bringing operational demands. Our partners are strengthening capabilities in storage, transit handling and TATs to ensure product integrity, says **Abhishek Goyal, CEO and ED, Aeroprime Group**.



How do current global economic trends affect your air cargo decisions?

The global economic landscape today is dynamic and unpredictable, with rising fuel costs, inflationary pressures, trade wars and geopolitical tensions influencing our cargo operations. Fluctuating fuel prices impact freight rates and operational costs, require close coordination with our airline partners to optimise routes and manage margins.

Inflation affects cost structures and client purchasing behaviour, pushing us to maintain pricing agility without compromising service. Geopolitical disruptions — from trade restrictions to regulatory changes — necessitate con-

tingency planning and network diversification. We have adopted a proactive approach using market intelligence and real-time data to stay ahead of disruptions and ensure continuity, reliability and value for clients. We build a robust cargo pipeline that helps maintain a steady flow of shipments for our partners.

What emerging technologies do you see influencing air cargo?

The industry is undergoing a technological transformation, reshaping how we deliver efficiency, transparency and customer satisfaction. Implementation of e-AWB in air cargo is reducing paperwork, minimising errors, and speeding up processing times. IoT-based tracking is a must for providing real-time visibility for high-value or temperature-sensitive shipments.

Blockchain is a powerful tool for enhancing transparency, traceability and security across the supply chain. Using AI-driven technology, we optimise load planning, ULDs and other cargo operations to en-

Inflation affects cost structures and client purchasing behaviour, pushing us to maintain pricing agility without compromising service

sure maximum efficiency for our partner airlines. As part of our vision, we are not just embracing these technologies but are integrating them into our operations in collaboration with forward thinking airline partners and solution providers. The result is a more agile,

connected, and customer-centric ecosystem.

How do you manage capacity issues during peak seasons or in times of sudden demand?

Managing capacity during peak seasons or demand surges — be it festivals, e-commerce booms, trade wars, or disruptions — requires a proactive and data-driven approach. We leverage trends, real-time market intelligence and coordinate with our partners to forecast and respond to demand fluctuations.

In cargo, this includes optimising load planning and securing additional capacity wherever possible and offering flexible booking solutions to accommodate time-sensitive shipments. Technology enables us to track demand shifts



Abhishek Goyal
CEO and Executive Director
Aeroprime Group

“Today, clients expect real-time visibility, be it tracking a pharma shipment or managing a last-minute travel itinerary.”

in real-time, helping us reallocate resources effectively. It is the blend of foresight, agility and industry relationships that enables us to navigate high-pressure situations, while ensuring continuity and reliability for our clients.

How do you mitigate risks associated with delays, cargo damage or regulatory non-compliance?

Risk mitigation is a fundamental part of our operational strategy, embedded across cargo services. In cargo, we enforce rigorous SOPs, tem-

perature control protocols and documentation compliance to ensure shipments are handled safely and in full alignment with global regulations. We work with vetted partners across the logistics chain and leverage real-time tracking systems to monitor cargo movement and address any disruptions. We invest in training, quality control and process audits to strengthen our compliance posture and minimise operational risks. Transparency, proactive communication and a network of insurance and service partners enable us to respond swiftly when challenges arise, ensuring continuity and confidence in our clients.

What are the key challenges in coordinating with multiple stakeholders?

Coordinating with multiple stakeholders such as airlines, ground handlers, freight forwarders and customs, requires a balance of structure, agility, and relationship management. Each stakeholder operates under different protocols and priorities, which can create friction, especially during time-sensitive operations. Clear communication, real-time data sharing and SOPs are essential to align timelines.

In our role as a GSA, we serve as the central link in this chain. We facilitate transparent coordination, proactive issue escalation and seam-



less handovers. While digital tools have enhanced visibility and information flow, the human element remains critical. Our experienced teams maintain strong on-ground relationships and conduct regular reviews to ensure swift resolution of bottlenecks. In a high-stakes environment such as cargo, trust and alignment are everything. That is where our value as a GSA comes to the forefront.

Which verticals do you witness growing rapidly?

We are seeing growth across verticals such as pharma, perishables, electronics, value cargo and leather goods, each bringing unique operational demands. The pharma sector requires precision in temperature-controlled logistics and compliance with strict handling protocols. In response, our partners have invested in advanced cold chain infra, real-time monitoring and staff training to manage sensitive shipments with confidence.

The perishables segment, driven by growing exports of fresh produce and seafood, is expanding fast. Our airline partners are strengthening their capabilities in storage, transit handling and quick TATs to ensure product integ-

rity is preserved throughout the journey. Our focus here is on high-velocity handling, visibility tools and coordination with last-mile partners. To stay ahead, we are adapting by building sector-specific expertise, expanding our partner network and aligning operational strategies to support the demands of these verticals.

How have client expectations evolved over the past few years in terms of speed, visibility and service?

Today, clients expect real-time visibility and seamless communication — whether it is tracking a pharma shipment or managing a last-minute travel itinerary. They value flexibility and responsiveness in dynamic environments shaped by e-commerce, regulatory changes, or geopolitical events.

What are your expansion plans for travel and cargo?

We are expanding our footprint across the globe and into potential markets through new airline partnerships. Our plans include the launch of technology-enabled platforms aimed at digitising bookings, streamlining client interactions and improving real-time visibility. ↗





DHL Express opens facility for air cargo operations at BIAL

The new service centre at AISATS Bengaluru Logistics Park within Bengaluru airport, spanning 17,900 square feet, is equipped with advanced material handling systems designed to enable faster and efficient shipment processing. DHL Express has invested millions in this expansion project.



CT Bureau

DHL Express has expanded its operations at the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), resulting in a consolidated footprint of 130,000 square feet. This expansion

This initiative addresses the increasing shipment volumes from SMEs and large enterprises across Southern India

includes the integration of a new, purpose-built service centre at the AISATS Bengaluru Logistics Park within the Kempegowda International Airport.

This initiative addresses the increasing shipment volumes from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large enterprises across Southern India, driven by the region's consistent economic growth and growing



global trade engagement. The new service centre, spanning 17,900 square feet is equipped with advanced material handling systems designed to enable faster and more efficient shipment processing.

It also incorporates automation technologies, including telescopic conveyors, wheel sorters and an operation logic-based conveyor

sequence for import and export processes. These enhancements are projected to reduce shipment processing times, enhancing throughput capacity and handling current and future cargo volume growth.

"The sustained economic dynamism across Asia-Pacific, particularly the trade growth witnessed in India, continues to be a cornerstone of global commerce. Strengthening our operations in Bengaluru is a response to this momentum. By enhancing our infrastructure in key markets, such as Southern India, we are reinforcing our commitment to facilitating seamless global trade and assure our customers that we have the necessary logistics setup to capitalise on these opportunities," informed Ken Lee, Chief Executive Officer, DHL Express Asia-Pacific.

The facility features dedicated drive-in bays for pick-up

and delivery of vehicles, designed to optimise shipment handling and minimise manual effort, thereby reducing turnaround times (TATs).

DHL Express's total investment in this expansion project amounts to €3.43 million. This expansion is timed to leverage India's significant geographic tailwinds, which is focused on accelerating sustainable growth in high-potential markets and diversifying global supply chains. Geographic tailwinds is also one of the growth areas DHL Group has identified as part of its Strategy 2030.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The facility features dedicated drive-in bays for pick-up and delivery of vehicles.
- It is designed to optimise shipment handling and minimise manual effort and turnaround times.
- The total investment in this expansion project amounts to €3.43 million.

India-Oman meet to unlock trade, investment opportunities

Oman has emerged as an attractive destination with favourable investment climate, characterised by a stable political environment, world-class infra and a one-stop shop portal, InvestEasy, for clearances & supply of raw materials. Its location between the East and the West offers potential for transshipment and trade.



Considering the current geoeconomic situation, Oman merits serious consideration from logistics perspective with its strategic location which supports lower logistic cost and dependable supply, key considerations to accessing global markets. Oman Vision 2040, launched in January 2021 by order of His Majesty the Sultan, strategically repositions the national competitiveness around six themes one of which is “world class infrastructure and transport services”.

Oman today has emerged as an attractive destination with a favourable investment climate, characterised by a stable political environment, world-class infrastructure (such as 5 modern airports, 4 world class sea ports, nationwide fibre optic connectivity and growing coastal ferry and shipping services), full foreign ownership in many sectors, one-stop shop portal InvestEasy for clearances, no restriction on capital and profit repatriation, region-

ally competitive costs, ready supply of raw materials (oil, gas, minerals, metals, other natural resources), 100 per cent population as urban with median age of 29.2 years (2023), wide use of English language and a supportive government. Its strategic geographic location serves as a gateway between East and West offering immense potential for transshipment and trade. Oman is well connected with a 3-hour flight from 30 per cent of the world's population. It is ranked as one

of the safest countries in the world.

While the India-Oman FTA nears conclusion, there are other agreements which make it an attractive investment location for setting up businesses. Illustratively, GCC-European Free Trade Association FTA with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway & Switzerland for goods & services covering industrial goods exemption from customs duties.

A case in point is Khazean Economic City, located just 60

km from Muscat with direct links to Sohar Port and major road networks. It is a planned city offering logistics, industrial, commercial and residential components in a single connected ecosystem. It offers special zone benefits such as

“Oman is well connected with a 3-hr flight from 30% of the world's population. It is ranked as one of the safest countries in the world.”

simplified regulatory procedures, duty exemptions and fast-track approvals through a single-window system. It hosts the first integrated international dry port in Oman. Free Zones offer further incentives such as no minimum capital requirement and exemption from customs duty and income tax (15 years extendable).



Rajesh Lal
Co-founder, Optimax Aces and
Treasurer, Warehousing Association
of India (WAI)

*(The views expressed are solely of the author.
The publication may or may not
subscribe to the same)*

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in India, along with Optimax Aces and India & Arab Countries Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, is all set to host 'India-Oman Business Connect' — an exclusive economic event, on 17 September, 2025 in New Delhi with a high-level delegation from Khazean Economic City — Oman's premier integrated economic and logistics hub.
- The focus sectors are food processing, cold chain logistics, pharmaceuticals, healthcare logistics, textiles, factory outlets, light manufacturing and export-oriented SMSEs.

‘Fostering accountability, innovation for growth’

As the logistics industry evolves, the demand for hyperlocal and same-day deliveries has increased with a focus on sustainability and rise of multimodal transportation. To stay ahead, we focus on people, technology and partnerships, says **Ketan Kulkarni, Managing Director and CEO, Gati Express and Supply Chain**.



CT Bureau

As part of its goals to develop capable business leaders, Ketan Kulkarni, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Gati Express and Supply Chain has been entrusted to lead the firm into the next



Ketan Kulkarni
MD and CEO, Gati Express
and Supply Chain Limited

“With a foundation of tech, talent and trust, we are positioned to shape the future of express logistics in the country.”

phase by focusing on sales, operations, customer service and digital initiatives.

This realignment aims at strengthening regional operations, paving the way for deeper integrations along with customer-focused and technology-driven growth.

The company’s leadership transformation symbolises a shift in mindset towards be-



ing future-ready and more responsive to customer needs.

“We are on a mission to build a future-ready logistics enterprise — one that is agile, tech-enabled and deeply rooted in customer-centricity. Our ongoing expansion plans focus on strengthening our regional footprint, enhancing infrastructure and embedding technology across the value chain to deliver faster, smarter and more reliable express and consultative solutions,” he said.

“As the logistics industry evolves, we foresee megatrends reshaping the landscape, including accelerated digitisation, demand for hyperlocal and same-day deliveries. To stay ahead, we focus on investing in our people to deliver exceptional value to customers,” Kulkarni added.

“Our leadership transformation,” he said, “is centred on empowering talent, while fostering collaboration, accountability and innovation. We are driving skilling and opportunities for our teams. With a foundation of technol-

ogy, talent and trust, we are positioned to shape the future of express logistics in India.” The company’s leadership restructuring aims to empower the next generation to take on expanded responsibilities at the national level, fostering a culture where leadership is driven by collaboration, trust, and shared purpose.

The new structure focuses on strengthening core business verticals. Leaders will set the broader strategy, while zonal heads are empowered to execute on the ground enabling quicker decisions, faster responses and localised solutions. Each zonal head brings deep regional insight and is accountable for end-to-end operations and collections.

Their goal — to ensure seamless execution, elevate customer engagement and craft strategies tailored, scalable and tech-driven. This decentralised model firms focus on speed, flexibility and staying in sync with on ground realities. It brings a fresh blend of experience and youthful energy into leadership, creat-

ing an environment where new ideas are encouraged, talent is groomed from within and leaders are given room to grow. Since Allcargo Gati steps into its next chapter, the leadership transformation sends a clear message that it is ready to scale with speed, lead with empathy, and innovate with purpose. Backed with the long-term vision of the Allcargo Group and powered by its pillars of technology, talent, and trust, the company is positioned to shape the future of express logistics in the country.



ACCD hosts networking luncheon for members

Air Cargo Club of Delhi (ACCD) recently hosted a luncheon for its members, bringing together an afternoon of networking and collaboration. Participants enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere, delicious food and engaging conversations, reinforcing the ACCD's commitment to linking the cargo community.



Expo & conference 2025: Building smart cargo terminals

The 2nd India Cargo Terminal Expo & Conference 2025 aims to facilitate strategic dialogue and partnerships that drive the sector's growth. With an emphasis on automation, sustainability and multimodal integration, this edition aims to facilitate dialogue and partnerships to drive the progress of the sector.



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As anticipation builds for the 2nd India Cargo Terminal Expo & Conference 2025, the logistics and air cargo industry are set to converge once again for one of the most focused events in the sector.

Scheduled to be held between 28 and 30 August at Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, Dwarka, the event aims to bring together key stakeholders from air cargo,



ports, rail terminals, inland ports, CFS, warehousing, logistics and technology pro-

viders on one platform. The event promises to spotlight innovations, policy develop-

ments and infrastructure advancements shaping India's cargo terminal ecosystem.

With an emphasis on automation, sustainability and multimodal integration, the upcoming event would facilitate dialogue and partnerships to drive the growth of the sector. Stay tuned as we preview expert sessions, industry showcases, and the collaborative opportunities that lie ahead at this much-anticipated gathering.

Upcoming Events

2025

AUGUST

- 6** **AMTOI Day**
Mumbai
- 9-10** **Kolkata Cargo Football Tournament 2025**
Blob Turf, Kolkata
- 12-13** **Logis East 2025: Exhibition and Conference**
Kolkata
- 28-30** **India Cargo Terminal Expo & Conference 2025**
Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, Dwarka

SEPTEMBER

- 17** **India-Oman Business Connect**
The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in India, New Delhi
- 18-19** **Cold Chain Unbroken Conclave**
Novotel, Hyderabad
- 23-24** **The Central Asia Air Cargo Summit 2025**
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

OCTOBER

- 29-31** **Air Cargo Southeast Asia 2025**
Singapore

NOVEMBER

- 6-9** **49th ACAAI Convention**
Bali, Indonesia
- 20-22** **India Warehousing and Logistics Show**
Mumbai
- 15-17** **IATA World Cargo Symposium 2025**
Dubai World Trade Centre, UAE

DECEMBER

- 10-12** **India International Cargo Show (IICS)**
Mumbai

For more information contact: talk@ddppl.com

The dates shown on the annual event calendar are subject to change. Please refer to EventTalk in to track the changes in dates



Cumbersome documents must give way to digitalisation

Over 15 billion logistics documents are generated each year in India. Each of these documents has at least one copy made per shipment. A solution is needed that manages them electronically and facilitates transition of industry from a paper-dominated world to a digital first one seamlessly.

With the recent growth projected for the Indian logistics sector, there is one process, which has been ignored as a cost of being in this business — Document Deluge — the challenge of dealing with the volume of paper exchanged between stakeholders in logistics. More than 15 billion logistics documents are generated every year in India, with each of these documents has at least one copy made per shipment.

E-way bills and supporting documents alone accounted for six billion documents. Shipping bills and their supporting documents exceed another billion. We estimate a spend of €21 billion annually for the generation, processing, copying, archival and management of these logistics' documents. Eighty per cent of these documents are exchanged on paper during shipment. Less than 1 per cent of these documents are digitised end-to-end.

These volumes also indicated much larger issues concerning paper-based processes, including lack of audit logs and massive stacks of unstructured data that would require resources to extract meaningful information.

Single sources of truth and standardised formats leading to issues in managing versions, validation of documents such as ID proofs becomes cumbersome for all entities involved in shipping and logistics, storage facilities contain these documents, frequently without archival methods, leading to issues with extraction (for



auditing, validation or corrections) and could open businesses to the risk of fraud and data breaches.

The documents were rife with errors due to manual processing, which were harder to correct, considering the chal-

With a single platform for document management, the customers can meet compliance and audit needs across the board

lenges in search and retrieval. Physical documents are subjected to weather over-time. Sometimes, extreme events lead to the eventual, irreversible loss of organisational data. All these challenges inevitably lead to higher cost of operations, inability to take data-driven decisions, inordinate delays in fulfillment and overall lack of governance and accountability.

DIGITALISATION OF DOCUMENTS

To solve this Document Deluge, we need a comprehensive solution that would manage them electronically and facilitate the transition of the industry from a paper-dominated world to a digital-first one seamlessly.

Our Secured Document Exchange (SDEX) platform concluded a project at a large warehouse facility in Bengaluru, as Proof of Concept to measure the impact of the SDEX platform for large-scale manufacturers. The results highlight the need for a solution, such as SDEX in the logistics industry:

- For document storage and retrieval, the warehouse can save up to 50 per cent of their costs with SDEX
- The document retrieval turnaround is reduced from several days to a few seconds
- The client is now eliminating the production of 90,000 reams of paper, offsetting 770 kg of CO₂ per year.

- SDEX improved the operational efficiency by 30 per cent in the first year of the POC

- Seamless management of role-based access and tiered access to documents

- With a single platform for document management, the customer can meet compliance, regulatory and audit needs across the board, including adherence to standards such as ISO9001 and SSL



Rohan Kohlapure
Business Manager, Secure Document Exchange at Bosch Mobility Platform and Solutions

(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same)

Movements



AEQUS INFRA India

Shyam Kalyanasundaram has been appointed by Aequs Infra as its new CEO. In his new role, he will be responsible for enhancing occupancy across three clusters and spearheading Aequs' expansion into tier I cities. The firm will develop next-gen industrial parks in Bengaluru and Chennai.



GEODIS Americas

Laura Ritchey has joined GEODIS as President & CEO, Americas. She will serve as a member, Executive Board, which is chaired by Marie-Christine Lombard, CEO. In her new role, Ritchey will oversee management and growth of multiple business units in North and South America.



AIA CARGO Dublin

Giuseppe Tarantini has been appointed as chief executive by GSSA AIA Cargo. He has more than 35 years of experience in the air cargo industry. Previously, he worked as commercial project manager for dnata in the UK. He started his career at Swissair Cargo in Milan.



DHL GLOBAL FORWARDING APAC

Christopher Lim, MD, DHL Global Forwarding Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei, will succeed Bruno Selmoni as VP and Head, Road Freight and Multimodal, DHL Global Forwarding Asia-Pacific. He will continue to be based in Singapore.



Praveen Gregory, currently Senior Vice President, Ocean Freight, DHL Global Forwarding Asia-Pacific, will succeed Christopher Lim as Managing Director, DHL Global Forwarding Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei. He will continue to report to Niki Frank and will be based in Singapore.



Bjoern Schoon, Vice President, Global Business Development, OMS and OCM, DHL Global Forwarding, will succeed Praveen Gregory as Senior Vice President, Ocean Freight, DHL Global Forwarding Asia-Pacific. Schoon will soon relocate to Singapore, as per a release.

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As India's foremost pre-engineered steel construction solution provider, Interarch's strength lies in its diverse portfolio offering integrated design, engineering, manufacturing, and on-site project management. A proven track record and an expanding presence in new age sectors like **renewables/solar energy, semiconductors, EV, and data centers**, is a testament to the in-house engineering excellence and forward thinking that has led the company to great heights. Achieving a major milestone in the shape of its recent **public listing**, Interarch is well-positioned to continue its growth trajectory and maintain leadership in the PEB industry.



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