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EDITOR: Sanjeet

CHIEF EDITOR
Nisha Verma
nisha.verma@ddppl.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Ritika Arora Bhola
ritika.arora@ddppl.com

DESK EDITOR
VN Murthi
vn.murthi@ddppl.com

ASST. VICE PRESIDENT: Abha Gupta
abha.gupta@ddppl.com

GENERAL MANAGER: Harshal Ashar
harshal@ddppl.com

MANAGER: Jaspreet Kaur

ASSISTANT MANAGER: Samantha Pereira

DESIGN: Nityanand Misra

ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNER
Nitin Kumar
Aditya Pratap Singh
Anil Khatri Chhetri

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Anil Kharbanda
Ramesh Gupta

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Ashok Pana



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17% YoY growth in cargo tonnage at BLR Airport in 2024



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‘States must develop action plan to attract investments’

There is a need to develop regional and city-level logistics plans, says **Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry** during release of ‘Logistics Ease Across Different States 2024’ report in New Delhi. He presided over felicitation of ‘Logistics Excellence, Advancement and Performance Shield (LEAPS) 2024’.

CT Bureau

Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, stressed on implementing measures to promote green logistics, workforce inclusivity and facilitation of central government projects. Adoption of newer technologies such as AI, ML, Data Analytics was significant for achieving success in future, the minister said and laid emphasis on skill development in order to boost the logistics sector.



Piyush Goyal
Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Government of India

Stating that the country should encourage gender inclusivity and participation of

women in the sector, the minister said the states must leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the logistics sector

for success. The minister directed the respective states to have a look at multimodal hubs for inland container depots (ICDs) and make land available through the bidding mode to promote transparency and cutting down costs.

The minister urged the logistics sector to adopt LEAD framework—longevity, efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, accountability and digitalisation of processes—to transform the logistics sector and prepare India for a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

He also commended the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in making logistics a critical enabler for India’s economic growth. “Logistics should look at exponential growth for India to grow rapidly, he added.

Jitin Prasada, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, and Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) also graced the event. In the LEADS 2024, the report evaluates logistics performance

across four key pillars: Logistics infrastructure, logistics services, operating and regulatory environment, and the newly introduced sustainable logistics. It highlights the initiatives undertaken by various States and UTs across these pillars and identifies State/UT-

“The states must leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the logistics industry for greater success.”

specific opportunities to enable informed decision-making.

In addition to the launch of the LEADS 2024 Report, the event also hosted the felicitation function for the LEAPS 2024 Awards.

Goyal also launched the PM GatiShakti Course at GatiShakti Vishwavidyalaya, a 15-hour course on ‘PM GatiShakti concept for efficient





infrastructure planning and national development’.

The course will be hosted on the iGOT Karmayogi platform and University Grants Commission (UGC) SWAY-AM portal to ensure broad accessibility and will be integrated into the curriculum

of CTIs and State Administrative Training Institutes across India. Goyal, Prasada and Bhatia unveiled Report on Logistics Cost Framework prepared by NCAER, aiming at assessment of logistics cost in India. Guided by a task force comprising representatives from NITI Aayog, Union transport

ministries, MoSPI, academia, and industry stakeholders, this framework introduces a hybrid methodology to accurately estimate logistics costs, integrating EXIM and domestic cargo data.

These initiatives by the DPIIT are significant for strengthening the country’s

logistics ecosystem by fostering competitive federalism and recognising innovation, as they pave the way for an efficient, sustainable, and internationally competitive logistics sector, contributing to the country’s vision of becoming a US\$ 32 trillion economy by the year 2047. 🇮🇳

UNLEASHING India's export potential through AI



Boosting exports is crucial for giving pace to economic growth and fortifying India's position in global trade. By focusing on improving infra, enhancing logistics and streamlining trade policies, India can expand its export potential. Investments in technology, agriculture manufacturing and leveraging trade agreements can open new markets and increase competitiveness.



Ritika Arora Bhola

After recording double-digit growth in October 2024, India's exports in November contracted 4.85 per cent YoY to US\$ 32.11 billion, while the trade deficit widened to an all-time high of US\$ 37.84 billion due to a record surge in gold imports.

According to the available data from late 2024 and early 2025, though India's exports have grown, but the pace of growth has been uneven. India's merchandise ex-

IT & services exports: India's exports of IT services, software, and business services, have continued to perform well, with consistent growth in this sector. The IT industry remains competitive globally, though there is demand for outsourcing and digital services.

Government initiatives: The government has introduced measures to boost exports, such as offering incentives for specific sectors (e.g., electronics, textiles, agriculture), improving trade logistics, and negotiating trade agreements with other

HIGHLIGHTS

- The global economic slowdown, particularly in key markets such as the USA, Europe, and China, has affected demand for Indian exports.
- India's export of IT services, software, and business have continued to perform well.
- India's merchandise exports grew by around 2 to 3% YoY in the recent months.

ports grew by around 2 to 3 per cent year-over-year in the recent months.

Slow global growth: The global economic slowdown, particularly in key markets such as the USA, Europe, and China, has affected demand for Indian exports. Trade tensions, inflationary pressures, and increasing interest rates in the developed economies have contributed to weaker demand for textiles, engineering products, and chemicals, among others, which are export categories for India.

Commodity prices: Fluctuations in commodity prices, especially crude oil and metals, influence the country's export performance. When international prices of oil and other commodities are low, it reduces the overall value of the country's exports, even if the volumes remain stable or increase.

countries. These efforts have contributed to export growth, particularly in non-traditional sectors such as electronics and agricultural products.

Exchange rate: A relatively weaker Indian Rupee against the US\$ has also helped Indian exporters by making their goods competitively priced in international markets.

While Indian exports are growing in sectors, such as IT and agricultural products, overall export growth has been moderate in recent months. The challenges posed by slower global growth, reduced demand in some markets and volatility have slowed the pace of export expansion. However, government policies aimed at diversifying export markets and sectors offer the potential for long-term growth. According to industry projections, cargo volume is

expected to grow by 8 to 10 per cent annually, driven by the rise in e-commerce and demand for high-value products. The sector faces challenges hindering its growth, such as high taxes on Air

The sector faces challenges hindering its growth, such as high taxes on ATF, which has hit airline operating costs and profitability

Turbine Fuel, which has impacted airline operating costs and profitability. The absence of India's ratification of the Cape Town Convention complicates aircraft financing, leading to higher leasing rates. Also, the under-developed MRO capabilities result in outflows for component and engine maintenance abroad. Infrastructure




and regulatory hurdles, limit the sector's potential, demanding policy reforms and investments to sustain its rapid expansion.

TRADE DEFICIT

As per the data from December 2024 and early 2025, India is experiencing a trade deficit, although the situation has shown some improvement compared to earlier periods. The country's trade deficit is a regular feature of its economic landscape, and policymakers monitor the situation

closely to balance growth with external sector stability. Factors influencing India's trade deficit, including the high import bill for crude oil, gold, among others, while exports have been impacted by global demand and supply chain conditions. The trade deficit has fluctuated over the past year, and the govt government has taken various steps to manage the deficit, such as promoting export growth and reducing reliance on imports for certain goods.

India's export market is changing quickly. The machinery and electronics sectors are becoming critical. Sectors such as textiles, garments, gems and jewellery have declined sharply compared to export figures from 20 years ago. This change in results is due to shifting demand and the challenge of staying competitive in jobs that require a lot of labour.  delves into depth and finds out from experts' as to which commodities will drive growth in the coming years and boost exports.



Advanced forecasting to streamline logistics ops

“ Strategies to boost exports include leveraging dedicated cargo flights and advanced forecasting techniques to optimise capacity and streamline logistics operations. Aerodynamic operations and reduction of processing time through adoption of digital platforms for booking, tracking, and documentation. Optimising costs possible through energy-efficient technologies, automation, and route planning. Enhancing MRO capabilities by developing aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul facilities to establish India as a global hub for aviation servicing. The sector is poised to boost exports in coming months.



Keku Bomi Gazder
MD & CEO
Aviapro Logistic Services

Optimising costs possible through energy-efficient technologies, automation

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Trade deficit & inflated US Dollar affect exports

“As per latest report, exports contracted 1 per cent in December due to low crude prices, but trade deficit narrowed down to a three-month low. Factors such as US Dollar appreciation, continued disruption in supply chain and potential trade tariffs, are affecting exports. Since the exports are on the decline, schemes such as incentivising specific commodities for a tenure, setting up value-based export targets with drawback scheme, are focusing on perishables & pharma to help boost exports. India will have huge air cargo capacity in coming decade with new aircraft in service.”



Dipen Lalsodagar
Deputy Director, Cargo Sales, Global Aviation Services

India will have huge air cargo capacity in next decade with new aircraft in service



India must explore new markets to boost exports

“We are facing challenges such as Red Sea crisis, Russia-Ukraine war, and trade tensions involving the USA and China and Mexico. To address these, India must explore new markets and expand its products and services. India should close the gap between sectors such as electronics, textiles and gems and jewellery, by adjusting tariffs that hinder growth. Simplifying customs, improving business conditions, and encouraging innovation are vital to hike exports. The drivers of merchandise export growth include electronic and telecom products, drugs, pharma among others.”



M Afzal Malbarwala
MD and Founder, Galaxy Freight

India should close the gap between various sectors by adjusting tariffs

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Trade deficit due to weak USA & EU demand

“Export performance has shown mixed trends, with double-digit growth in October 2024 followed by a contraction of 4.85 per cent in November last, indicating a period of volatility. The underlying reasons for this contraction and the overall trade deficit include a slowdown in global demand due to geopolitical tensions, inflationary pressures, and reduced consumption in markets such as the USA and European Union (EU) which has affected exports. Exporters of sectors such as textiles, electronics, and agriculture, may face challenges in maintaining competitive pricing.”



CK Govil
CMD
Activair Airfreight

Textiles, electronics exporters may face challenges in competitive pricing



Exports likely to surpass US\$ 800 billion this year

“The country’s exports are likely to surpass US\$ 800 billion this year, driven by high-growth sectors, including manufacturing, electronics, and pharmaceuticals. This expansion underscores the country’s economic landscape and its capacity to meet rising global demand for innovative products. Important drivers, including innovation in hi-tech machinery and healthcare, highlight the country’s growing significance in international trade. As India diversifies and expands its export portfolio, we are investing to help businesses strengthen their position in global markets.”



Grégory Goba-Blé
Head, UPS India &
Director, MOVIN Express

Machinery and healthcare, highlight India’s significance in global trade

Incentives to boost high-value exports

“ To promote exports from India, the policies on vital segments are likely from the government; it should consider addressing the complexities in disbursement of funds under the PLI schemes apart from pacing up of incentivisation—helping boost towards high-value exports. The manufacturing capabilities should be strengthened on the domestic front. And India must focus on skilling its youth population such as the Skill India and Make in India mission. For boosting Indian exports, infra development is crucial with reduced logistical costs.”



Sunil Kohli
Managing Director,
Rahat Cargo

For boosting Indian exports, infrastructure development is crucial with reduced costs



Renegotiating FTAs to open new opportunities

“ To enhance exports, India must diversify markets, targeting emerging economies and non-traditional regions. Strengthening manufacturing under Make in India and improving quality standards are key. Renegotiating FTAs can open new opportunities. Promoting supply chain digitisation and reducing logistics costs through infra upgrades will improve efficiency. Incentives for value-added products, MSMEs support, and global branding initiatives will help India gain a competitive edge in global markets. Export drivers include electronics and electric vehicles, among others.”



Vipin Vohra
Chairman
Continental Carriers

Incentives for global branding will help India gain edge in global markets



FACT FILE

- The challenges posed by slower global growth, reduced demand in some markets and volatility have slowed pace of export expansion.
- As per December 2024 and early 2025, India is experiencing a trade deficit, although the situation has shown some improvement compared to earlier periods.

Reforms to create skill development initiatives

“ Despite recording double-digit growth in October 2024, exports contracted by 4.85 per cent in November due to global economic uncertainties and rising import costs, particularly gold. This calls for an approach to sustain growth and address structural challenges. AI and blockchain can enhance export performance. AI enables predictive analytics for demand forecasting, inventory optimisation, and supply chain transparency, reducing inefficiencies and improving global competitiveness. India's logistics costs remain among the highest at 14 per cent of GDP. India also faces a shortage of skilled manpower.”



Vijaya Govindarajan
Head, Academic Affairs,
TT Skill Development

Exports contracted by 4.85% in Nov due to global economic uncertainties



Global supply chains bear brunt of geopolitical tensions

It has been witnessed that in the past few years, global supply chains have become vulnerable due to geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, political instability, Covid-19, cyber-attacks and natural disasters. Trade disputes and political unrest causes disruption of critical supply chain routes.

 Akash Tyagi

Global supply chains are the backbone of international trade that fuel economic growth paving the way for sourcing, manufacturing, logistics and distribution of products.

But it has been witnessed that in the past few years, global supply chains have become vulnerable due to geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, political instability, Covid-19, cyber-attacks and natural disasters. These different sorts of geopolitical risks can affect supply chain resilience posing challenges to the businesses.

Trade disputes and political unrest causes disruption of critical supply chain routes. Tariffs, sanctions and changes in regulatory policies surge the cost of goods.

The wars in Syria, Ukraine, and Israel among other regions have created instability, disrupting trade routes and airspace, leading to delays and increased costs. Also, Covid-19 highlighted vulnerabilities in global supply chains, causing widespread disruptions across various industries.

As the global supply chain is facing the wrath of these geopolitical risks; it becomes




crucial to navigate them following implementation of effective risk management

strategies. The industry must unite and mitigate potential disruptions in a bid to

EXPECTATIONS IN 2025

- Trade disputes, political instability cause supply chain disruptions.
- Syria, Ukraine, and Israel have created instability in global supply chain.
- Identifying potential threats early, implementing mitigation strategies key to counter geopolitical risks.
- AI enables detection of potential disruptions through predictive analytics.
- Predictive analytics can forecast demand fluctuations.

safeguard the supply chains. Navigating these geopolitical risks is crucial for businesses aiming to maintain operational resilience and ensuring smooth flow of goods across borders. Identifying potential threats early, understanding their impact, and implementing mitigation strategies are

key to minimising the impact of geopolitical risks on functioning of the global supply chains.  interacted with experts to get their insights on the management strategies to cope with geopolitical risks, and how advancements can prove to be crucial in neutralising such risks.



Geopolitical shifts led to change of trade routes

“ It is important to ensure resilience and continuity in the global supply chains. The idea of China+1 strategy has positioned India as a key player owing to our low manufacturing costs, skilled workforce, and strategic trade partnerships, such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. The focus of suppliers is on resilience through infrastructure investments such as National Infrastructure Pipeline. Shifts such as the USA-China trade war, regime change in Bangladesh, and the Israel-Palestine war, have led to changes in trade routes. Digital solutions will enhance India’s supply chain flexibility.”



Nari Katgara
Director
Jeena Global

The focus of suppliers is on resilience through infrastructure investments

Indian manufacturing prowess steadily growing

“ Global geopolitical shifts have prompted firms to reassess their supply chain dependencies. Many are reducing reliance on China due to rising tariffs and geopolitical uncertainties, turning to India as an alternative for manufacturing and sourcing. This shift aims to enhance supply chain resilience and mitigate risks associated with over-dependence on a single country. The semiconductor shortage has highlighted vulnerabilities in supply chains, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions. India is steadily becoming a player in the semiconductor industry, attracting investments and developing local manufacturing capabilities.”



Amitava Bakshi
President, Association
of Supply Chain
Professionals

Semiconductor shortage has highlighted vulnerabilities in supply chains

Minimising disruptions by leveraging data analytics

“ Risk management strategies are vital for coping with geopolitical risks in global supply chains. They help minimise disruptions, control costs, ensure compliance with rules, and enhance resilience through contingency planning. By leveraging data analytics and proactive decision-making, companies can mitigate impacts such as delays, cost increases, and regulatory changes. These strategies safeguard supplier ties and brand reputation, ensuring operational continuity and long-term competitiveness. Major supply chain disruptors include geopolitical risks, natural disasters, pandemic and demand fluctuations.”



Abhijeet Nair
CEO
FEI Cargo

Strategies help minimise disruptions, control costs and ensure compliance

Port jam often causes delays, inflated costs

“ Risk management strategies are critical now as they enable businesses to minimise disruption and maintain resilience in face of geopolitical risks. These strategies ensure firms can pivot by identifying suppliers, adjusting routes, or leveraging FTAs to avoid bottlenecks. It is about combining proactive planning with real-time decision-making. Logi-Sys provides a ‘captain’s view’ of operations, empowering businesses to anticipate risks and take swift operational action. Port congestion, labour strikes, and shifting regulations are disruptors, which cause delays and raise costs.”



Kunal Maheshwari
Chief Growth Officer,
Softlink Global

Logi-Sys provides a view of operations and empowers companies to expect risks

Geopolitical tensions, cybersecurity a big threat

“ The advent of AI-driven logistics and real-time data analytics is empowering the industry to make swift and informed decisions, assisting in optimising routes and managing risks effectively. Innovative tech will also be essential for the sustainability legislation, with smart container and carbon footprint tracking platforms helping carriers avoid additional fees and tariffs. With the prevailing geopolitical tensions, cybersecurity has also become a big threat through cyber-attacks, for supply chain professionals. The focus will shift to ensure supply chains are resilient and secure from external threats.”



Rajneesh Garg
CIO
ECU Worldwide

Data analytics empowers the industry to make swift and informed decisions

Automation, robotics redress labour shortage

“ Risk management strategies are vital in mitigating geopolitical risks’ impacting global supply chains. The methods include diversification of suppliers and leveraging multi-modal logistics to reduce dependency on high-risk regions. Scenario planning and predictive analytics help organisations to anticipate disruptions. A risk management framework ensures that the supply chain is resilient, minimises delays, and protects profitability in volatile climates. At BLR Airport, our initiative focuses on partnerships and leveraging technologies thereby ensuring stability amidst uncertainties.”



Arun Chandra
Vice President, Aviation
Business, BIAL

A risk management framework ensures supply chain resiliency

Partnerships for real-time adaptability of disruptions

“ We emphasise risk assessment, scenario planning, and diversification of supply routes to ensure continuity. Partnerships, compliance frameworks, and leveraging technology for real-time monitoring enhance adaptability of disruptions. By integrating contingency planning and fostering resilience, we safeguard seamless flow of goods, ensuring clients’ supply chains remain competitive in an increasingly volatile geopolitical landscape. Supply chain disruptors include geopolitical tensions, trade wars, natural disasters, pandemics, cyber-attacks, and fluctuating trade policies.”



Vipin Vohra
Chairman
Continental Carriers

By planning and fostering resilience, we safeguard the seamless flow of goods



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Technology to avert geopolitical risks

“ Global supply chain is always prone to disruptions. There should always be a mitigation strategy to cope up with them. For example, when lockdown came out of nowhere, technology came as a facilitator and if that had happened before, the industry would have been shock-absorbent to the losses. Similarly, now due to the Red Sea crisis, stakeholders are spending an additional US\$ 500 per container. Here again technology is coming up as a risk management strategy to avert geopolitical risks. By implementing these strategies, losses or leakages in the topline or bottom line can be thwarted.”



Vineet Malhotra
Co-founder & Director,
Kale Logistics Solutions

Due to Red Sea crisis, stakeholders are spending US\$ 500 extra per container

Technology to develop strong contingency plans

“ Companies must identify and mitigate potential disruptions to safeguard their supply chains. Risk management enhances agility, allowing firms to adapt swiftly to changing conditions. By diversifying suppliers and implementing flexible logistics solutions, organisations can mitigate the impact of disruptions from trade wars or natural disasters. Leveraging technologies enable businesses to simulate scenarios and develop robust contingency plans. Supply chain disruptors include geopolitical wars and conflicts, political instability, natural disasters, and the pandemic.”



Abhishek Goyal
CEO &
Executive Director
Aeroprime Group

Leveraging tech enables businesses to develop contingency plans



Contd. on page 22 ▶

Leverage logistics customs control tower to enhance efficiency

Today, exporters and importers must optimise working capital to maintain profitability and competitiveness by leveraging logistics and customs control tower, a centralised platform that enhances visibility, compliance, and efficiency, says **Sanjeev Madavi, Chief Innovation Officer, Kale Logistics Solutions.**

WORKING CAPITAL OPTIMISATION IN EXIM OPERATIONS

Working capital—defined as current assets minus current liabilities—is crucial for businesses engaged in EXIM operations. It ensures companies have enough liquidity to manage day-to-day transactions, procure inventory, and maintain supply chain resilience.

However, EXIM operations often face challenges such as high customs duties and delays at ports, regulatory complexities and compliance issues, inefficient logistics management leading to stock-outs or excess inventory and unpredictable lead times affecting cash conversion cycles.

To mitigate these issues, businesses are increasingly adopting logistics and customs control tower approach to enhance end-to-end visibility and operational efficiency.

ROLE OF LOGISTICS AND CUSTOMS CONTROL TOWER IN WORKING CAPITAL OPTIMISATION

A logistics and customs control tower is a digitalised command centre that consolidates real-time data from multiple sources, including freight forwarders, customs authorities, shipping lines, and warehouses. This solution provides:

ENHANCED VISIBILITY AND PREDICTABILITY

Global trade involves complex networks of suppliers, carriers, and regulatory bodies. A control tower enables real-time tracking of shipments, helping businesses optimise lead times



Sanjeev Madavi
Chief Innovation Officer
Kale Logistics Solutions

“A control tower enables real-time tracking of shipments, helping businesses optimise lead times.”

and reduce working capital locked in transit. According to McKinsey, companies that improve supply chain visibility can reduce inventory levels by 20–30% and enhance order fulfilment rates.

CUSTOMS COMPLIANCE AND COST EFFICIENCY

Regulatory compliance is one of the biggest hurdles in EXIM operations. Non-compliance can result in heavy fines, shipment delays, and even confiscation of goods. By integrating AI-driven compliance checks, a logistics and customs control tower minimises the risk of errors and accelerates customs clearance. The World Bank reports that reducing customs clearance times by just one day can increase trade volume by 1–2%.

RISK MITIGATION AND COST REDUCTION

The global shipping industry faces frequent disruptions due to geopolitical tensions, labour strikes, and extreme weather conditions. A control tower helps anticipate risks and implement contingency plans, reducing demurrage charges and transportation costs by up to 15%, as per Deloitte's supply chain analysis.

CONCLUSION

For exporters and importers,

optimising working capital is critical to maintaining financial health and sustaining growth. Implementing logistics and customs control tower ensures better visibility, compliance, and efficiency in EXIM operations.

By integrating AI, a logistics and customs control tower minimises risk of errors & boosts customs clearance

By reducing inventory levels, mitigating delays, and improving customs compliance, businesses can unlock significant cost savings and working capital advantages.

As global trade dynamics continue to evolve, leveraging digital control towers will become indispensable for achieving operational excellence and financial stability.



Navigating challenges for ensuring continuity

“ Risk management strategies play a vital role in addressing geopolitical risks that threaten global supply chains. Trade curbs, political instability, and regulatory shifts can disrupt operations. We prioritise risk assessment, scenario planning, and diversification of sourcing to build supply chain resilience. By leveraging predictive analytics and fostering collaboration with the industry stakeholders, we navigate challenges to ensure operational continuity. Risk management framework transforms uncertainties into opportunities, helping us maintain seamless service.”



Ronak Shah
Executive Director,
V-Trans (India) &
CEO, V-Logis

We prioritise risk assessment, scenario planning to build supply chain resilience



Critical to know potential threats, grasping impact

“ Geopolitical risks are significant challenges for global supply chains, making effective risk management essential for ensuring business continuity. Identifying potential threats early, understanding their impact, and implementing mitigation strategies are critical steps. This includes working with suppliers from different regions, mapping supply chain routes to spot vulnerable and weak locations, planning for possible scenarios and implementing risk avoiding and safeguarding strategies. Keeping track of political changes, trade issues, and sanctions is vital.”



Amit Tandon
CEO &
Managing Director
Asia Shipping India

Keeping track of political changes, trade issues and sanctions is important

ACFI unites air cargo experts in Goa to drive innovation

The Air Cargo Forum India (ACFI) Goa Chapter recently held stakeholders meeting at Manohar International Airport emphasising air cargo industry's critical role during the pandemic and its evolution. The forum also engaged with MoCA to address the single window system and ensure all necessary agencies are involved.



CT Bureau

The forum covered relevant points such as opportunities in air cargo industry and ACFI's vision for growth, the importance of air cargo in bridging supply chains for sectors, the role of ACFI in policy advocacy and process simplification for the industry.

The forum also engaged with the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation to address the



single window system and ensure all necessary agencies are involved. The air cargo forum's training committee will soon develop and implement training programmes for skill

development in the air cargo industry. Emphasis was laid on how can local chapters such as the Goa Chapter contribute to the overall growth of the air cargo sector and how can ACFI im-

prove the efficiency of customs operations, especially for trans-shipment cargo. The meeting was attended by airlines, MOPA and Dabolim Airport representatives, CHAs.



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Navigating the skies: Air cargo reigns supreme

Industry has demonstrated resilience in face of numerous challenges. But today, it stands as a leader in delivering high-value goods driving economic growth and enabling businesses to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world says, **Satish Lakkaraju**, CEO, NexGen Logistics, Garudavega.

 Ritika Arora Bhola

What are the pain points faced by air cargo stakeholders?

Due to the unpredictable weather conditions in Europe and USA, belly and freighter capacity is getting impacted. It is also causing massive flight cancellations and delays in cargo movement.

Recent fires in Los Angeles have created apprehensions in the minds of the Indian exporters and importers. The US Dollar rates rising to ₹86 is a good sign for Indian exporters, but a cause of concern for importers. In the coming years, the US Dollar vs Indian Rupee exchange will continue to be volatile, given the fact India continues to import crude oil and that is another important aspect



Satish Lakkaraju
CEO, NexGen Logistics
Garudavega

from a cargo standpoint. Fuel surcharge is one of the aspects to calculate the freight rates. In the express industry, the freight rates change on a weekly to a monthly basis. But the freight rates from the airlines change on monthly basis. So that is one volatile factor determines the prices for the air freight when you may have a base rate on it.

Eighteen per cent GST on air freight is another concern, which is impacting businesses.

The on-going Russia-Ukraine war is still impacting the global supply chains. To avoid the war zones, the traders are taking longer routes, which means longer transit times for air as well as ocean.

Do you think USA wildfires have impacted Indian trade?

As of now, there is no impact, but what we would anticipate is that there is a lot of damage and devastation that has happened, from a residential standpoint. To rebuild the city, there will be a need for a lot of cargo mainly consumer durable products to be reaching out into the USA soon, which could include home furniture, carpets and handicraft items among others. While it is a

“ Indian airports in comparison to the global ones are excellent. None can be rated lower than the airports abroad.”

tragedy that has happened, but there is an opportunity in terms of what can be getting back into the USA.

How do you anticipate industry's growth over next five to 10 years?

Considering geopolitical situation, India is a country that is neutrally liked by other countries whether it is Russia, the USA, Japan among others. Seizing this opportunity is the best thing that Indian businessmen and traders



We are nowhere close to China, but e-commerce is a great opportunity, which we can capitalise on to a large extent

over how to handle and get to the unbroken cold chain over the last so many years. We have been successful in the transportation of vaccines. So, I think it is another opportunity that we should be looking at. We must tap the opportunities coming in from transshipment cargo from Hong Kong, Singapore and the Middle East. We have also got the largest aircraft orders. Air India recently merged with Vistara, while IndiGo has an opportunity of flying freighters. If the government looks at transshipment seriously and can help fighting the issues of security and other aspects, it will boost efficiency.

must capitalise on. Another is the chunk of opportunities coming from the growth e-commerce market. We are nowhere close to China, but it is a great opportunity, which we can capitalise on it to a very large extent.

Since India is the largest pharma manufacturer, almost all the pharma packaging firms are currently operating in India. It is more economical for those who want to export from India and for countries which want to import because the US Food and Drugs Administration approvals are in place for most of the companies.

India has the largest US FDA approved organisations outside the USA. So, I think it is a plus point. We have come

In the industry ready to achieve 10 MMT target by 2030?

In terms of looking at 10 MMT target, we are currently close to 3 billion MT. We have still got five years from now and add 1.2 million year-on-year, technically, to achieve the said target. This growth can come from domestic as well as global cross-border trade. To get there, we need to focus on 10 or 12 potential countries that hav bilateral pacts in place. In India, there is need to focus on

one district, one commodity and use the regional connectivity to get to the 10 million MT mark. Transshipment cargo covers more than 50 per cent of the traffic, as seen in the Gulf region. To get to the 10 MMT target, a lot of effort must take place from all these sources.

How does India compare to other Asian nations in terms of air cargo services?

Indian infrastructure has been developed commendably in the past one decade. The industry had faced huge constraints and infrastructure upgradation has been done keeping in view all the bottlenecks, be it at ports, airports, roadways and the like.

The tier I airports—Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai—have seen great infra and tech developments. The second airport in Mumbai will come up this year. The Noida International Airport will be operational soon. A second airport is likely to come up in Chennai soon. We are also looking at states such as Andhra Pradesh where infrastructure is coming up right from Visakhapatnam down up to Nellore.

Indian airports in comparison to the global ones are excellent. None of them can be rated lower than the airports abroad. But we are lacking the speed at which we can turn around cargo because that is what will finally determine the air cargo growth. One of

the challenges is the time the cargo takes in reaching the airport. This has become quite challenging now, with Grap-III and IV curbs implemented in Delhi NCR and among other issues.

Tell us about ongoing projects at NexGen Logistics. What kind of services do you provide?

NexGen Logistics, part of Garudavega, is an express delivery company, dealing in C2C segment. We looked at C2C segment as an opportunity and are working on creating a C2C product. We effortlessly make the customers' luggage/baggage/ cargo delivery experience seamless right from the pickup to the final delivery. We provide services such as picking up cargo/ packaging/ delivery. Also, we deliver during festivals globally and ensure less transit time and door-to-door services.

There are screening machines at all major hubs whether it is Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad. We will be adding additional equipment in all major hubs, other than the current locations we are functioning in. We have 500 stations and plan to expand to a 1,000 more in the next four years—this means that we are looking at 120 locations every year. Currently, the expansion is restricted to locations in the country. We are also looking at locations abroad such as Nepal and Sri Lanka. "We are planning to enter B2B business space as we see there is an opportunity for us. The C2C segment product offering can be extended to B2B also.



FACT FILE

- India has the largest US FDA approved firms outside the USA. We have been successful in the transportation of vaccines.
- The second airport in Mumbai will come up this year. The NIA will be operational soon. A second airport is likely to come up in Chennai.

Robotics & automation revolutionise warehouses



Warehouses are playing a role in driving efficiency across supply chain by leveraging technology and optimised storage solutions. As these technologies evolve, they continue to transform warehousing sector into an agile, scalable, and efficient industry, ensuring faster delivery of goods.



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The development of advanced warehousing infrastructure and technology is driving efficiency in supply chain operations. Modern warehouses are incorporating technologies such as automation, AI, and IoT to optimise inventory management, enhance order accuracy, and reduce costs. Smart racking systems and robotic solutions streamline product sorting and retrieval, while real-time data analytics provide insights to improve decision-making and reduce downtime.

Energy-efficient designs and sustainable practices are contributing to more eco-friendly operations. As these technologies evolve, they continue to transform warehousing into an agile, scalable, and efficient sector, ensuring faster delivery of goods.

WAREHOUSING CAPABILITIES

Multimodal transport hubs can enhance warehousing capabilities by integrating multiple modes of transport—road, rail, air, and sea—into a seamless logistics network. This allows efficient flow of goods

across the country, reducing transportation time and costs. By centralising operations at multimodal hubs, businesses can benefit from optimised storage solutions, as goods can be transferred between different transport modes and warehouses. This leads to improved inventory management, better stock control, and faster distribution, crucial for industries with high demand fluctuations.

Observing the same, Vikram Mansukhani, Chief, Operations, Blue Dart Express, said, “These hubs minimise

transit times, reduce handling errors, and improve inventory management, ensuring timely deliveries and better customer satisfaction. By centralising operations, they optimise resource utilisation and scalability, enabling businesses to adapt to dynamic supply chain demands with ease. A major advantage of multimodal hubs is their flexibility in choosing transport modes based on cost, speed, and efficiency, allowing businesses to respond to market fluctuations, while maintaining logistics performance. Enhanced connectivity across rail, road, air, and sea



Vikram Mansukhani
Chief, Operations
Blue Dart Express

“These hubs minimise transit times, reduce handling errors, and improve inventory management.”

ensures smoother transitions between modes, reducing bottlenecks and lead times, while improving supply chain resilience. Sustainability is another significant benefit. The adoption of eco-friendly transport modes such as rail and water reduces carbon footprint.”

“Multimodal hubs enable seamless cargo movement, enhancing linkage to ports, industrial clusters, and consumption centres. At V-Logis, we align our operational facilities with multimodal networks to streamline network, minimise handling, and improve inventory turnover. This approach ensures greater efficiency, optimised resource utilisation, and elevated customer satisfaction, aligning



Ronak Shah
Executive Director, V-Trans (India)
& CEO, V-Logis

“Multimodal hubs enable seamless cargo movement, enhancing linkage to ports and industrial clusters.”

with India’s push for a robust logistics infrastructure,” Ronak Shah, Executive Director, V-Trans (India) & CEO, V-Logis, said.

Agreeing, Mohit Kapoor, Chair, Projects & Events Committee, Warehousing Association of India, said, “Ware-

houses near multimodal hubs gain faster and cost-effective access to markets and suppliers. Seamless transfer between transport modes minimises delays, enhancing supply chain efficiency. With quicker transport options, companies can maintain leaner inventory levels and reduce storage costs. Strategic placement of multimodal hubs enables warehouses to serve as value-added service centers, including packaging, kitting, and light manufacturing. Utilising environmentally friendly transport modes, such as rail or waterways, reduces the carbon footprint of logistics operations.

Expressing similar sentiments, Sandeep Chadha, Founder & CEO, Warehouser, said, “We position our facilities near key transport corridors to maximise these benefits. By seamlessly connecting road, rail, air, and waterways, multimodal hubs enable faster cargo movement, reducing delays and optimising supply chains. They unlock greater storage capacity by streamlining the flow of goods, crucial for industries such as e-commerce and automotives. In essence, these hubs serve as



Mohit Kapoor
Chair, Projects & Events Committee
WAI

“With quicker transport options, firms can maintain leaner inventory levels and reduce storage costs.”

catalysts for agile and resilient warehousing ecosystem, helping businesses meet growing customer expectations.”

“For warehousing, this reduces transit times and enhances supply chain efficiency. We specialise in advanced entrance automation and load-





Sandeep Chadha
 Founder & CEO
 Warehouser

“For warehousing sector, this not only reduces transit times but also enhances supply chain efficiency.”

ing bay equipment that complements these hubs. Our solutions, such as dock levelers, sectional overhead doors, and high-speed doors, enable efficient loading and unloading processes, ensuring faster turnaround times and reducing bottlenecks. By integrating automation into these hubs, warehousing operations become more agile, capable of handling increased volumes while maintaining operational accuracy,” Samir Gandhi, MD, Gandhi Automations said.

“A key benefit of MMLPs is the reduction in warehousing costs,” asserted Arshdeep Singh Mundi, Executive Editor, Jujhar Group. “Warehousing



Samir Gandhi
 MD
 Gandhi Automations

“By integrating automation into these hubs, the operations become agile and handle increased volumes.”

es situated in logistics parks, often outside urban centres, leverage lower rental costs, while maintaining accessibility to multiple transport links. This positioning reduces operational expenses and provides businesses with scalable solutions to accommodate growing storage needs. Improved connectivity through multimodal hubs helps alleviate urban congestion, allowing for faster and reliable delivery services to end-users. MMLPs enable better logistics management by centralising operations, facilitating inventory consolidation, and improving real-time tracking of goods. This ensures transparency and accuracy across the supply



Arshdeep Singh Mundi
 Executive Editor
 Jujhar Group

“These hubs integrate solutions aligning with industry goals like renewable energy & green transport.”

chain, enhancing service quality. Sustainability is another advantage, as these hubs integrate eco-friendly solutions, such as renewable energy and green transport options, aligning with industry goals to reduce carbon footprint,” Mundi added.

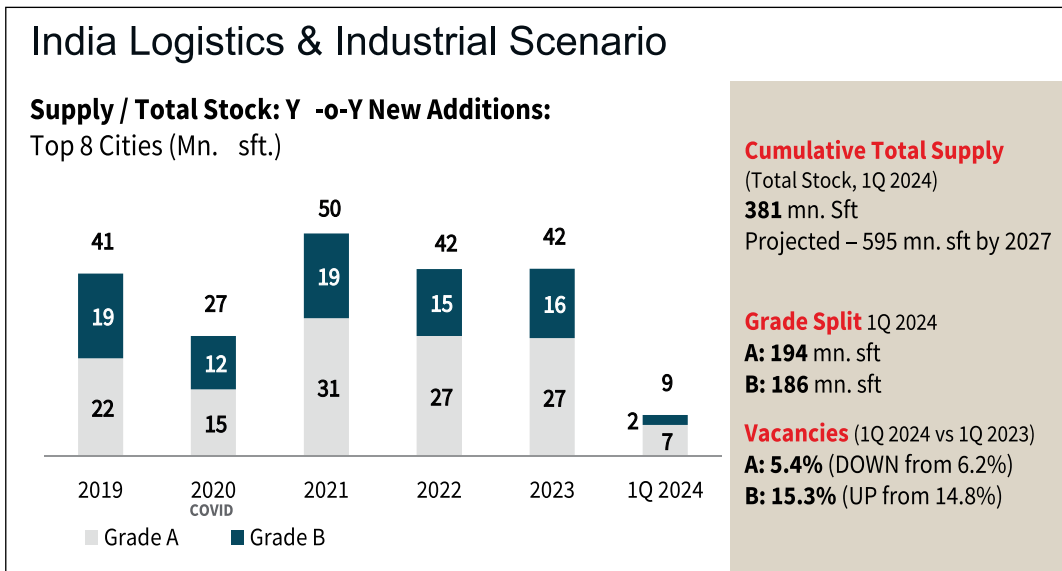
“Multimodal transport hubs will create value in setting up robust distribution network. These distribution networks will become relevant in the larger scheme of things, boosting the domestic economy. It will do good for many companies who want to follow ‘hub & spoke’ concept. With growing demand this will also increase the demand nationally for warehouses

and this will lead to improved sourcing of best tools & practices, which will help improve warehousing capabilities,” Shesh Kulkarni, Managing Director, Noatum Logistics, said.

ROBOTICS & AUTOMATION

Robotics and automation are revolutionising warehousing by enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and speed in operations. Automated systems such as robotic arms, conveyor belts, and sorting machines streamline picking, packing, and inventory management, reducing human error and increasing throughput. These technologies enable warehouses to operate with precision and faster TAT, especially in high-demand environments. Automation allows for real-time tracking and data collection, providing insights for optimising storage, reducing costs, and improving overall supply chain performance. As robotics continue to evolve, they are shaping the future of warehousing, making operations scalable, flexible, and cost-effective.

Mansukhani said, “Advanced technologies streamline critical processes such as inventory management, order fulfillment, and material handling, reducing operational costs, while enhancing productivity. Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) and robotic arms minimise manual labour and errors, with AGVs ensuring seamless movement of goods and robotic arms accelerating picking, packing, and sorting tasks with precision. Automation systems such as





Shesh Kulkarni
 Managing Director
 Noatum Logistics

“These networks will become relevant in the larger scheme of things, boosting the domestic economy.”

conveyor belts and sorting solutions enable 24x7 workflows, boosting throughput and minimising downtime. Automation enhances inventory management with real-time tracking and analytics, maintaining accurate stock levels and preventing stock-



outs or overstocking. Scalability is a key advantage, allowing facilities to adapt quickly to demand fluctuations, such as seasonal surges, without manual intervention. Automation contributes to a safer work environment by reducing reliance on workers for hazardous or physically demanding tasks, lowering the risk of injuries.”

“Automation and robotics are transforming warehousing



by streamlining processes and improving efficiency. Robots, such as AGVs and AMRs, speed up tasks such as picking, sorting, and packing. Automating repetitive tasks reduces labour costs and minimises errors. Robotic systems can utilise vertical storage space, increasing storage density. Automation systems can adapt to fluctuations in demand, supporting peak seasons without the need for additional work-

force. Robots handle hazardous or physically demanding tasks thereby reducing workplace injuries,” Kapoor said.

“Advanced entrance automation and loading bay equipment, such as motorised rolling shutters, high-performance doors, dock shelters, and vehicle restraint systems, integrate with existing systems to ensure efficient material flow and

controlled environments for specialised needs such as cold storage and pharmaceuticals. These solutions streamline operations, reduce manual intervention, and improve safety by minimising risks. Automation also reduces downtime through predictive maintenance and optimised workflows, enabling warehouses to handle higher volumes with reliability and efficiency, meeting the demands of modern supply chains,” Gandhi added.

“In addition to operational efficiency, automation enhances inventory management. Automated systems provide precise tracking and real-time data, ensuring accurate inventory levels and reducing discrepancies. This accuracy facilitates better demand forecasting and inventory planning to optimise stock levels and reduce holding costs. Scalability is another advantage of automation in warehousing. Robotics as a Service (RaaS) models allow warehouses to scale robotic deployments based on demand fluctuations without upfront investments. This flexibility enables busi-

nesses to adapt to peak periods efficiently, maintaining high service levels, while controlling costs,” Mundi added.

“Artificial Intelligence-based tools, and automation will drive efficiency in warehousing operations. It will, in the long run, cut growing cost and improve yield and productivity,” Kulkarni averred.

“Automation is not about replacing manual labour—it is about augmenting human potential, enhancing safety, and scaling operations to meet fluctuating demands. By leveraging these technologies, we have reduced errors, accelerated TAT, and improved inventory visibility. It is like giving our warehouses a turbocharged brain, ready to tackle the challenges of today’s fast-paced supply chains,” Chadha asserted.

GOVERNMENT IN DRIVING EFFICIENCY

Mansukhani said, “Government initiatives such as GST and NLP have enhanced warehousing efficiency and logistics operations in India. GST’s

Services

- Robotic systems can utilise vertical storage space, increasing storage density
- Automation reduces downtime through predictive maintenance and optimised workflows

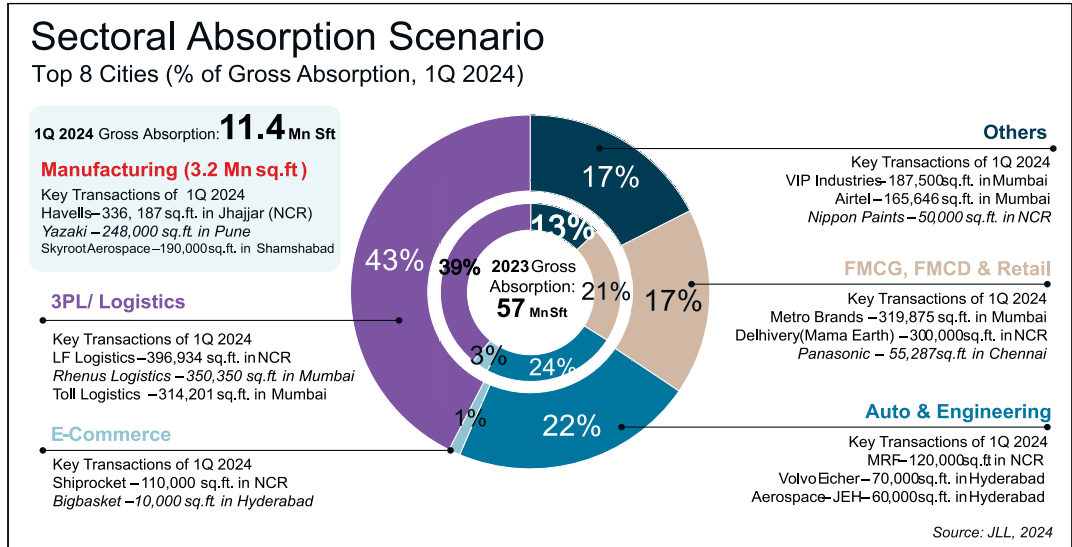
Highlights

- AI-based tools, and automation will drive efficiency in warehousing operations
- AGVs and AMRs speed up tasks such as picking, sorting and packing

unified tax framework has eliminated inter-state barriers, enabling businesses to consolidate warehouses into strategically located hubs, reducing transit times and optimising inventory management.”

“This simplification promotes operational agility and cost-effectiveness. Similarly, the National Logistics Policy addresses critical logistics challenges, focusing on infrastructure development, multimodal transport integration, and digitalisation. By fostering seamless connections between warehouses and transport networks, the policy also reduces delays and ensures timely deliveries. Together, these measures have transformed supply chain dynamics, empowering businesses to innovate, remain competitive, and deliver superior customer experiences,” he added.

Shah asserted, “Government initiatives such as GST and National Logistics Policy have been game changers for warehousing in India. GST has enabled the consolidation of warehouses into strategically located hubs, reducing redundant facilities and streamlining supply chains. The National Logistics Policy’s focus on improving infrastructure and reducing logistics costs fosters an ecosystem conducive to efficiency and scalability. At V-Logis, we are aligned with these reforms, leveraging policy-driven benefits in order to offer clients robust, compliant, and cost-effective warehousing solutions.”



Kapoor said, “GST promotes the consolidation of smaller, regional warehouses into larger, centralised hubs and reducing costs. It simplifies tax compliance by eliminating the need for state-specific warehouses, enabling a more integrated supply chain. NLP aims to reduce logis-

PMGS strengthens coordination across infrastructure projects, enhancing connectivity for warehouses

tics costs from 14 per cent to 8 per cent of GDP by improving infrastructure and adopting technology, encourages the development of modern logistics parks and multimodal

transport hubs. It emphasises skill development and adoption of digital technologies such as IoT, AI, and blockchain to enhance warehousing efficiency. PMGS strengthens coordination across infrastructure projects, enhancing connectivity for warehouses. It supports faster movement of goods through multimodal logistics systems. These initiatives collectively help build a resilient and efficient warehousing ecosystem, essential for supporting India’s growing economy and aligning with goals such as Make in India and Viksit Bharat.”

Gandhi said, “Modern warehousing infrastructure, equipped with advanced solutions such as dock houses, mobile dock ramps, and scissor lifts, aligns with these policy goals by improving operational efficiency and sustainability. These initiatives have created

opportunities for businesses in order to optimise their supply chains, enhance throughput, and adopt innovative technologies to meet the evolving market demands.”

Mundi said, “GST has simplified compliance by reducing the complexities associated with multiple taxes such as VAT, CST, and Entry Tax. The introduction of the electronic e-way bill system has minimised paperwork, expedited movement of goods across state borders and reduced transportation time. These measures have lowered the average cost of logistics operations, contributing to enhanced efficiency in the warehousing sector.”

Kulkarni said, “Both GST and NLP have a big role to play as both of these establish clarity with regards to applicable Tax, and the logistics policy helps in establishing clear rules of engagement which is the need of the hour.”

Concluding, Chadha said, “GST has done away with the inefficiencies of state-specific tax barriers, allowing the businesses to consolidate their warehousing strategies into larger, centralised hubs. NLP provides a roadmap for logistics infrastructure development, promoting sustainability and reducing costs. These policies are regulatory changes—they are enablers, help us innovate, scale, and contribute to the country’s vision of becoming a global logistics powerhouse.”



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AMTOI links logistics experts for driving transformation

Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India (AMTOI) hosted its 4th quarterly meet recently in New Delhi. The meet focused on geopolitics and opportunities in multimodal transportation. It saw participation from airlines, shipping lines, freight forwarders, CTOs, and industry experts.





Shortage of manpower impacts supply chain efficiency



Govt must strengthen PPP model to create scalable and sustainable training solutions. The association also focuses on training logistics aspirants, developing expertise and skills. Reducing carbon footprint, minimise waste, and support eco-friendly practices, says Amitava Bakshi, President, ASCP.

 Akash Tyagi

Can you throw light on recent activities or projects of ASCP?

The Association of Supply Chain Professionals (ASCP) works towards connecting professionals, educating aspirants and developing skills, thus contributing to nation building. The ASCP has recently concluded its 8th Annual Supply Chain Conference. It brought together a galaxy of speakers from various sectors—industry, academia and government—to deliberate on the important topic on ‘Responsible Chain: Redefining business for a sustainable future’. Besides, the ASCP had organised a bespoke gathering in Dubai last year to spread awareness of the association amongst the supply chain professionals of Indian companies in UAE. The ASCP also conducted roundtables and industrial visits for its members to promote the development of knowledge on various opportunities and challenges in the supply chain.

What is ASCP’s mission for this year?

Develop trained supply chain professionals as value-based leaders to take the lead in sustainable supply chain solutions and minimise environmental footprint and benefits for future generations. The ASCP will promote professionals and help them to build up desired levels of expertise and skills. It will provide a platform for systematic growth of the professionals through



Amitava Bakshi
President, ASCP

its various regional chapters in the country. The association will also focus on sustainability objectives, aiming and advising to reduce carbon footprint, minimise waste, and support eco-friendly practices of member organisations.

What are the key issues the ASCP will take up with the government?

The association is planning to work with the Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya to strengthen their training and skill development programme.

“Overdependency on road transportation compared to rail and waterways leads to higher cost”

What is hampering the Indian supply chain?

The current pain points hindering the supply chain:

1. The logistics cost in India is 13 to 14 per cent of the GDP compared to the developed countries (8 to 9 per cent) due to inefficiencies in transportation and inventory management. Over dependency on road transportation (60 per cent) compared to more economical rail and waterways also leads to higher cost.
2. Shortage of skilled workforce in logistics management impacts efficiency
- and innovation in the supply chain.
3. Insufficient cold storage and transportation impacts the shelf life of farm products in the agri-based economy. High cost of setting up and maintaining the cold chain is the deterrent to the investment in this field.
4. Supply disruptions due to vulnerability driven by external factors such as geo-political tensions and pandemic among others. This is enhanced due to the dependence of the international supply chain on certain inputs, such as electronics, pharma, among others.
5. Lack of adequate infrastructure: Dedicated freight corridors (DFCs), road conditions, rail and port infrastructure and modern warehousing facilities need further development in the country.
6. High carbon footprint in the Indian logistics sector due to dependence on fossil fuel.



7. Adoption of advanced technology such as IoT, AI, Blockchain, robotics and the like in the supply chain.

How do you see the state-wise logistics plans impacting growth of logistics sector?

State-specific logistics plans, aligned with the National Logistics Policy (NLP), play a pivotal role in transforming India's logistics landscape. By addressing regional needs and promoting sustainable practices, these initiatives contribute to the nation's economic growth and development. As of September 2023, 22 states and Union Territories have notified their respective State Logistics Policies (SLPs), aligning with the NLP to bring a holistic focus on logistics at the state level. They will attract more investments in the states due to creation of conducive environment for logistics operations. It will promote the use of cleaner fuel like LNG to reduce the carbon footprint of logistics operation.

How much development has been done under PMGS and NLP?

The PMGS and NLP are driving improvements in India's infrastructure and logistics sectors, fostering economic growth and enhancing global competitiveness. Key developments under NLP include engagement of 22 states and Union Territories announcing their logistics plan in alignment with the NLP. The policy has taken a target to reduce the logistics cost from 13 to 14 per cent to global benchmark level by 2030. It will help



in generating significant employment in the supply chain function considering that it is poised to grow at a CAGR of 10.5 per cent through 2025. The PMGS was launched in October 2021, it has evaluated 200 projects worth more than ₹15 lakh crore to ensure alignment with the Gati Shakti principles. Over 400 railway corridor projects have been initiated and 20,000 have been completed under the PM Gati Shakti Master Plan.

What initiatives are in place to increase number of skill development institutes?

While the government and private sectors have focused on setting up skill development centres, it is still shy of meeting the demand-supply gap. The supply chain sector is poised to grow at 10.5 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) and will need as many as 22 million skilled professionals in 2025

to manage it. The infrastructure to develop these capabilities still needs further enhancement. The government needs to strengthen public-private partnerships to create more scalable and sustainable training solutions. Further, there is an imbalance in the availability of these centres between urban and semi-urban/rural locations. The government needs to focus on setting up more skill development centres in the semi-urban/rural areas in the country.

What do you expect from the government to help streamline the supply chain?

The government has taken all the right steps in addressing the supply chain opportunities and challenges in this country. The formation of Logistics Division under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, formulating the PM Gati Shakti and National Logistics Policy, is giving the right direction and focus to build a resilient and efficient supply chain in India.

The 'Make in India' initiative is also driving the country to be self-sufficient in critical supply chain and manage the global geopolitical risks. More focus on funding and executing various projects identified under PMGS will prepare the country and its industry to meet the competitive challenges of the international economy.

How crucial is tech adoption for enhancing productivity?

While MSMEs and SMBs in India are beginning to embrace supply chain technologies, their adoption remains limited due to financial, infrastructural, and skill-related challenges. Efforts from the government, private sector, and industry associations can

The MSMEs and SMBs need to improve their productivity to be competitive in the market

bridge these gaps, empowering MSMEs to leverage technology for greater efficiency, competitiveness, and resilience. The MSMEs and SMBs need to improve their productivity to be competitive in the market, particularly with e-commerce and agri products. Players such as Amazon, Flipkart are providing business to the MSEs and SMBs and have helped them to adopt technology to enable real-time inventory management and logistics management systems. The Government e-Marketplace portal (GeM Portal) provides the MSMEs business and necessary tools and training for supply chain digitisation. 📈

Insights

- ASCP to promote skilled professionals in logistics
- ASCP plans to collaborate with Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya
- Shortage of skilled workforce in logistics management
- 22 states and UTs have notified their respective logistics policies

Impact

- NLP to help in reducing the logistics cost by 2030
- The PMGS National Master Plan has evaluated 200 projects since its introduction
- About 400 railway corridor projects have been initiated under PMGS
- The supply chain sector to grow at 10.5% CAGR

India & Azerbaijan aim for strong trade connections this year

By fostering connectivity and collaboration at local and global levels, we are progressing towards our vision to make Azerbaijan a vital link in global supply chain, contributing to sustainable growth, say **Kamran Habibov**, Chairman and **Elmir Poladov**, Board of Directors, Freight Forwarding Association, Azerbaijan.



Ritika Arora Bhola

Tell us about the inception of Azerbaijan's freight forwarding association?

The Azerbaijan International Road Carriers Association (ABADA), a 25-year-old organisation has focused on road freight transportation to and from the country. Over time, as Azerbaijan has integrated into global logistics concepts and processes, the demand for forwarding services has increased and evolved.

Recognising these developments, we observed forwarding as an activity needing distinct regulations and business models compared to those represented by ABADA members. While ABADA has played a vital role in road transport sector, the complexity within the industry called for a framework to address these needs. As the most experienced logistics company operating in Azerbaijan, we decided it was time to take a decisive step toward



Kamran Habibov
MD, Hellman Worldwide Logistics,
& Chairman, Freight Forwarding
Association, Azerbaijan

the advancement of our field. To foster transparency, clarity, and sustainable development within the forwarding sector, we set up a new association in 2021, tailored to meet the specific demands of our industry.

Aim of this association?

Our association is dedicated to positioning Azerbaijan as a key player in the global logistics and forwarding industry,

“ Our association is dedicated to positioning Azerbaijan as a key player in logistics & freight forwarding.”

reclaiming its role as a central hub on the Silk Road. Our mission is to leverage Azerbaijan's unique geographical location as a bridge, maximising its potential as a global transit hub for Eurasia. We aim to create a platform that unite freight forwarders across Azerbaijan, enabling collaboration, addressing industry challenges, and providing solutions through dialogue with relevant governmental and regulatory bodies.

By fostering relationships with Azerbaijan's governmental institutions and private stakeholders, we strive to streamline processes and support the sector's growth.

Currently, we are actively doing as follows:

- Enhancing Azerbaijan's integration into worldwide logistics processes, leveraging our country's infrastructure, including railway systems, ports on the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Our international airport, and national air cargo capabilities and collaboration with FIATA
- Working with governmental institutions and regulatory authorities to set up a clear, transparent, and business-friendly environment for forwarding activities, ensuring efficiency and compliance across the sector

- Building partnerships with neighbouring associations and global non-profit organisations such as TITR (Middle Corridor), TRACECA, and FIATA





Elmir Poladov
Board of Directors, Freight
Forwarding Association, Azerbaijan

“ Azerbaijan has created SEZs offering privileges & providing a cool environment for the investors.”

to align with global logistics networks and promote regional and international cooperation

- Facilitating logistics education and professional development by integrating CILT and FIATA into local varsities and offering internships to nurture professionals in the industry
- Supporting development of local logistics firms to ensure they remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global landscape

Our goal is to transform Azerbaijan into a logistics hub, ensuring smooth transportation of goods to and from the region. By fostering connectivity, transparency, and col-

laboration at local and global levels, we are progressing towards our vision of making Azerbaijan a vital link in the global supply chain, contributing to sustainable economic growth and reinforcing its reputation as a reliable partner in global trade.

Tell us about the products being moved to and from Azerbaijan globally?

Azerbaijan's primary exports include oil, oil-related materials, and chemicals. We import a variety of goods, including electronics, vehicles, factory equipment, raw materials, stone and granite products, pharma, and tea. For instance, pharma and tea are among the goods imported from India, reflecting the diversity of our trade relationships.

Aligned with our aim to position Azerbaijan as a global logistics hub, we focus on facilitating efficient trade for these essential imports and exports. By streamlining forwarding processes and enhancing connectivity, we aim to ensure seamless movement of goods. This supports the development of Azerbaijan's logistics sector and strengthens its role as a vital link in the global supply chain, contributing to sustainable economic growth and diversification.

How do you look at India as a potential trade destination?

Recently, Azerbaijan has restored its territorial integ-

rity and is focused on the comprehensive reconstruction and development of the liberated territories. This includes investments in infrastructure, construction, and the establishment of fully operational SMART Cities designed to ensure modern, sustainable living standards

shown interest, recognising the potential for growth and collaboration in sectors ranging from construction and technology to logistics and trade. By fostering such partnerships, Azerbaijan is positioning itself as a hub for innovation and international cooperation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Delhi is the primary destination in India connected to Azerbaijan.
- IndiGo Cargo has strengthened linkage and trade in Azerbaijan.
- Azerbaijan has created SEZ for local and international investors.
- Azerbaijan's export commodities include oil, oil-related materials, and chemicals.
- Imports include electronics, vehicles, factory equipment, raw materials, stone and granite products, pharmaceuticals, and tea.

and economic growth. As part of this transformation, Azerbaijan has created SEZs offering exclusive preferences and privileges, providing an optimal environment for both local and global investors. The SEZs are designed to attract foreign investments by offering regulations, tax incentives, and cutting-edge infrastructure. For example, investors from India have

What are the modes of transport in Azerbaijan for bulk cargo movement?

While rail is a cornerstone of Azerbaijan's bulk cargo movement, other modes of transport, including air and sea, are significant in facilitating trade and logistics. The air cargo sector is well-developed, with players such as Silk Way West



Contd. on next page ▶



Airlines—a freighter operating a fleet of wide-body aircraft. This airline links Azerbaijan to major cities worldwide, making it an essential link for inbound and outbound cargo. Recent developments, such as introduction of wide-body aircraft by Azerbaijan Airlines for passenger services between Delhi and Baku, creates new opportunities for leveraging capacity on passenger flights. These advancements enable efficient movement of goods, including exports from India to Azerbaijan and beyond.

Azerbaijan's location along the Caspian Sea and its modern ports, such as the Port of Alat, offers capacity for handling bulk and containerised cargo. The addition of specialised berths for dry and containerised goods enhances this capability, providing a seamless transition for multimodal transport solutions. The air and sea transport systems complement rail network, creating a comprehensive logistics ecosystem. Together, they position Azerbaijan as a key hub for bulk cargo movement across the region, integrating trade routes from East to West and North to South.

What are the cities covered presently in India?

At present, Delhi is the primary destination connected to Azerbaijan. With growing bilateral relations and increasing trade and tourism between India and Azerbaijan,

there is potential for expanding this network to include more cities in the future. Introduction of flights by IndiGo Airlines, including passenger ones and dedicated freighters, has strengthened linkage and facilitated trade and tourism. The frequency of such services highlights the interest of Indian businesses and tourists in Azerbaijan. The movement of tourists from India to Azerbaijan has been rising, supporting the need for enhanced connectivity.

As trade ties between the two nations deepen, this would expand opportunities for exports and imports and encourage business collaborations and cultural exchanges. The continued development of this partnership positions Azerbaijan as a key gateway for Indian businesses seeking access to the broader Eurasian region.

Should Azerbaijan and India sign an FTA?

India and Azerbaijan should consider signing an FTA. Given Azerbaijan's geographical position, FTAs with multiple nations would be a game changer. This aligns with the model seen in Dubai, which transformed into the Middle East's trade hub by creating a favourable environment for global commerce. Azerbaijan has the infrastructure, resources, and strategic location to replicate and surpass this success in the Eurasian region.

Azerbaijan has six global airports, located to support cargo and passenger operations. This aviation infrastructure places Azerbaijan in an ideal position to serve as a regional hub for global air traffic. With an FTA in place, Azerbaijan could leverage its airports to become a world-class plane refuelling and servicing station, offering competitive rates for airlines operating across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The reduced trade barriers introduced by an FTA would attract foreign investors to utilise Azerbaijan as a central hub for global supply chain operations. This includes developing large-scale international warehouse centres, facilitating storage and distribution for goods destined for Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East. The enhanced trade environment would bolster

Azerbaijan's role as a transit hub, connecting major trade routes such as the East-West and North-South corridors.

By inking FTAs and fostering a business-friendly ecosystem, Azerbaijan can maximise its geographical and logistical advantages, driving regional integration and becoming a key player in global trade networks.

Baku's infrastructure for cargo movement is evolving and shows promise, particularly for multimodal trans-

Baku's infra for cargo movement is evolving and shows promise, particularly for multimodal transportation

portation. The Azerbaijani government is investing in infra projects aimed at positioning the nation as a regional logistics hub. A key example is development of Alat Port, located 75 km from Baku. Known as the Alat Free Zone, this port is a vital hub for containerised and dry cargo, with more berths under construction.

Azerbaijan is planning a dedicated airport for cargo operations and other air freight infra. This new facility will feature warehouses equipped with the latest technologies, allowing seamless handling and storage of goods. Such developments make Azerbaijan a transit hub, but a full-service logistics centre, capable of supporting multimodal operations that combine road, rail, sea, and air transportation. From Alat Port, goods can be shipped across the Caspian Sea to Turkmenistan or Aktau in 20 hours of sailing, giving access to Central Asia. Its railway and road network link to the East-West and North-South transport corridors, linking Azerbaijan to Russia, Iran, and into Europe and China.



FFFAI raises toast to industry stalwarts at gala evening

The Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India (FFFAI) held 'Meet and Greet' with cocktails & dinner event recently in Mumbai. During the event, the FFFAI's achievements were celebrated and bonds strengthened in relaxed ambience. Trade associations, supporters and bureaucrats attended.



Mumbai evolving to overcome multimodal logistics obstacles

Trying to become a global cargo hub, Mumbai's transformation comes with its share of challenges. From congestion at airports to outdated infra and complex regulations—Mumbai is overcoming them by investing in logistics capabilities, and streamlining customs, says **Rajen Bhatia, Director, Tulsidas Khimji India.**



Infrastructure issues such as road congestion, limited multimodal connectivity, and delays affect cargo operations in Mumbai in several ways. Due to road congestion in Mumbai, cargo trucks get stuck in traffic and experience delays prolonging the transit times. This leads to missed deadlines, resulting in late deliveries, unhappy clients, and disruptions in supply chains.

ROAD CONGESTION

Heavy traffic leads to increase in fuel consumption and higher operational costs. The capacity of airport and port is limited and, whenever there is a slight surge in volume, there is road congestion and vehicles await their turn patiently to get offloaded. The entry and exit points procedure is cumbersome as it is controlled by CISF. Breakdown in



Rajen Bhatia
Director, Tulsidas Khimji India, and
Chairman, Western Region, ACAAI

online system is one of the reasons for affecting congestion and leading to delay in cargo operations.

The lack of rail facility within the port areas is affecting faster and economic movement. In conclusion, congestion at ports and airports—regardless of how minor the surge in volume is—

“Congestion at ports and airports, however minor, can create a cascading effect of delays, higher costs etc.”

can create a cascading effect of delays, higher costs, and supply chain inefficiencies that hurt businesses and disrupt the flow of goods, particularly in critical, fast-paced markets such as Mumbai.

MULTIMODAL LOGISTICS HURDLES

In Mumbai, cargo is moved either via ports such as Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA). As far as air cargo is concerned, capacity is the

main issue. The growing demand for air freight, combined with limited capacity in the cargo terminals, leads to overcrowded storage areas, causing delays in dispatch or delivery of goods. The industrial area is scattered, far from both airport and port. Absence of dedicated roads hinders the smooth flow of traffic to port and airport. While Mumbai's ports and airport are well-connected to road transport networks, the integration with rail or inland waterways is often inefficient. This limits the ability to transfer goods between different modes of transport, causing delays, especially when trucking is the only viable option.

NEED SMART WAREHOUSES

The lack of sufficient modern warehousing facilities at the airport and the ports exacerbates logistical issues. The availability of cargo storage space can be a bottleneck, especially during peak shipping seasons. Coordinating the transfer of goods from one mode of transport to



another is time-consuming and inefficient due to poorly designed infrastructure and limited availability of specialised equipment. Port-related logistics often involve long clearance times due to inefficient customs procedures or lack of automation.

RELIANCE ON PAPERWORK

Manual documentation, inspections, and compliance checks can slow down cargo movement, especially for time-sensitive goods. The reliance on paper-based documentation at ports and airports causes delays. Frequent inspections of goods and delays in processing clearance paperwork can affect overall transit times. Frequent changes in trade policies, tariffs, compliances being introduced on a regular basis defeats the purpose of EoDB. On top of this, customs regulations can

Lack of training and expertise can slow down ops, contribute to human errors, and affect efficiency of goods movement

create confusion and delays, as logistics operators scramble to comply with new rules or requirements.

CARGO SECURITY

Thefts can occur during long delays on the road between ports, airport and warehouses. Heightened security measures, especially after terror attacks or natural disasters, can slow down cargo handling at ports and airport. Additional checks, screenings, and compliance measures also take up valuable time.

MONSOON TROUBLES

Mumbai experiences heavy rains and flooding during the monsoon season (June to September), which can cause delays in port and airport operations. Port operations can be suspended due to weather conditions, and air traffic may be disrupted due to reduced visibility or runway flooding.



SHORTAGE OF SKILLED WORKERS

The logistics sector faces a shortage of skilled labour, including truck drivers and port workers. The lack of training and expertise can slow down operations, contribute to human errors, and affect efficiency of goods movement. The lack of standardised procedures for handling goods, especially for specialised cargo, can lead to mistakes causing delays or damages to goods. Unavailability of specialised handling equipment leads to damages and delay causing cost effectiveness.

18% GST ON AIR FREIGHT

Implementation of 18 per cent GST on air freight has impacted freight forwarding process in Mumbai. While the introduction of GST was intended to streamline India's indirect tax structure and create a unified tax environment, its impact on forwarding operations has been mixed, especially in high-traffic regions such as Mumbai. It has increased the cost of moving goods by air, especially global shipments. Forwarding firms will now have to bear the additional tax burden, which they pass on to customers. This has led to an increase in the overall cost of air cargo services, particularly for businesses that rely on air freight for time-sensitive shipments.

Forwarding firms need to pay the GST upfront on services rendered, which can lead to cash flow issues, especially for small and medium-sized

businesses. While they can claim input tax credits (ITC) later, the upfront cost of 18 per cent GST impacts the working capital of logistics providers. Freight forwarders across India have been forced to enhance their understanding of GST compliance, for services they provide (air freight) and for the broader logistics chain (customs and warehousing, among others).

Was NLP beneficial?

For a logistics hub such as Mumbai that handles cargo volumes through its ports, airports, and road networks, the impact of the policy has been transformative in several ways. One of the major components of the NLP is the development of Dedicated Freight Corridors, particularly the Mumbai-Delhi Freight Corridor. These corridors help improve the speed and efficiency of rail-

based freight transportation, directly reducing congestion on roads and lowering transportation costs for businesses moving goods between key industrial hubs. The policy's push for better multimodal connectivity (rail, road, ports, and airports) has led to investments in projects such as Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, which aims to ease congestion around the city's ports. These infrastructure improvements enhance flow of goods in and out of Mumbai, reducing delays and bottlenecks, especially at JNPT.

The NLP aims to upgrade port facilities and ensure faster TAT for ships, reduce congestion at ports, and improve inland connectivity. These upgrades focus on modernising cargo handling processes, expanding capacity, and making ports competitive on a global scale. Mumbai's ports such as JNPT, benefit from these infrastructure improvements, resulting in reduced waiting times for vessels, faster cargo handling, and better utilisation of port facilities. This enhances Mumbai's role as a major global gateway and reduces port-related delays for the freight forwarders.

By improving efficiency and optimising SCM, the policy aims to lower costs for businesses across industries. The NLP encourages a unified logistics market by standardising logistics processes across India and making it easier for businesses to engage in cross-state trade.

CHALLENGES

- Growing demand for air cargo, combined with limited capacity in cargo terminals, leads to overcrowded storage areas, causing delays in dispatch or delivery of goods.
- The industrial area is scattered, far from airport and port.
- Absence of dedicated roads hinder the smooth flow of traffic to port and airport.
- Availability of cargo storage space can be a bottleneck, especially during peak shipping seasons.
- Manual documentation, inspections and compliance checks can slow down smooth cargo movement.
- Unavailability of specialised handling tools leads to damages and delay causing cost effectiveness.

Redefining loading bay ops with dock leveler solutions

Gandhi Automations introduces new dock leveler solutions to enhance operational efficiency. They can be interlocked with existing doors and vehicle restraint systems, ensuring top-notch performance and security in every operation. Designed to meet EN 1398 standards, they are designed for most demanding tasks.



Dock levelers play a crucial role in enhancing efficiency and safety of loading and unloading operations. The company offers Electro-hydraulic, Pneumatic, and Mechanical Dock Levelers, each designed to ensure fast, smooth, and safe transitions between vehicles and loading bays. Designed to meet EN 1398 standards, they are engineered for most demanding environments.

The platform surface features an MS almond-shaped anti-slip checkered plate, with a robust 12+2 mm thickness, providing enhanced durability and safety for optimal performance. Available in capacities of 6, 9, and 12 tonnes, the dock levelers are versatile enough to meet a wide range of operational needs.

To meet diverse loading needs, the company provides a comprehensive range of dock levelers:



Radius Lip Dock Levelers: Available in various sizes and capacities, these dock levelers connect the dock with the truck bed, facilitating easy drive-on and drive-off operations for forklifts and other equipment. Their self-cleaning lip-hinge system prevents the accumulation of dust and dirt, ensuring smooth operation.

Dock levelers can be interlocked with existing doors and vehicle restraint systems, ensuring efficiency

ent truck heights, such as warehouses, distribution centres, and retail facilities. The EOD levelers offer an efficient, space-saving solution for quick loading and unloading in locations where installing a pit-style leveler is not feasible. They offer reliable performance and safety for efficient loading operations.



Telescopic Lip Dock Levelers: These are ideal for situations where vehicles cannot dock closely, such as sea containers or side-loading railway wagons. They come with an extendable lip that can reach up to one meter, providing flexibility in various loading scenarios.

Edge-of-Dock Levelers: Compliant with the latest EN 1398 safety standards, the EOD Levelers are ideal for facilities without an existing pit, where the height difference between the loading dock and the truck bed is minimal. These levelers are suited for environments with consist-

Forklift Roll-Off Barrier Lip Dock Levelers: Our newly introduced dock levelers include a run-off protection feature that prevents accidental forklift roll-off when the overhead door is open, and no trailer is present. This leveler combines the benefits of hydraulic dock levelers with the added security of a robust barrier.

All dock levelers can be seamlessly interlocked with existing doors and vehicle restraint systems, ensuring top-notch performance and security in every loading operation.

Investment in automation drives efficiency in warehouse sector

Automation and robotics are revolutionising warehousing by enhancing efficiency, accuracy and safety, while reducing operational costs. Firms investing in these technologies gain an edge through faster order fulfilment and lower overhead expenses, says **Pratap Hazra, Founder, Beyond Sqfeet Supply Chain Solutions.**



CT Bureau

How are automation and robotics impacting warehousing operations?

Below are the key areas where automation is making a significant impact:

Enhanced speed and efficiency: Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) & Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs), move inventory within warehouses thereby reducing the need for manual transportation and speeding up operations. Automated conveyor and robot sorting systems streamline order processing, reduce delays in picking and packing.

Improved accuracy and reduced errors: AI-powered robotic arms equipped with vision systems can identify, pick, and pack items with precision and reduce human errors. RFID and IoT tracking enhance smart inventory management through RFID

tags and IoT sensors ensuring real-time tracking of goods, minimising misplacement and stockouts.

Cost reduction: Robots handle repetitive and physically demanding tasks, by reducing reliance on manual labour, while increasing productivity. Automated vertical storage systems maximise warehouse space by using AI to arrange products efficiently.

Increased warehouse safety: Automation minimises human involvement in hazardous tasks, lowering injury risks. AI-powered robotics can predict equipment failures, preventing unexpected downtimes and accidents.

Sustainability and energy efficiency: Automation optimises inventory turnover and reduces expired or obsolete stock. Smart warehouses utilise Artificial Intelligence to optimise lighting, HVAC, and material flow and cuts down on energy consumption.

Automation and robotics revolutionise warehousing by enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and safety, while reducing operational costs.

Companies that invest in such advanced technologies gain a competitive advantage through faster order fulfilment and lower overhead expenses.

What role do GST and NLP play in warehousing efficiency?

GST-Impact on warehousing efficiency: Before GST



Pratap Hazra
Founder
Beyond Sqfeet Supply
Chain Solutions

implementation, a unified tax system removed the need for state-wise warehouses, allowing businesses to consolidate and build large, centralised distribution centres. Streamlined taxation reduces compliance costs, making warehouse operations cost-effective. Fewer checkpoints and seamless interstate transport reduces delays and improves pace of supply chains. Companies can now place warehouses based on demand and connectivity than tax considerations.

“AI-powered robots equipped with vision systems can pick and pack items with precision & cut errors.”

implementation, warehousing locations were driven by tax efficiency rather than logistics efficiency. Firms maintained multiple small warehouses in different states to avoid interstate taxes. After GST im-

NLP boosting warehousing and supply chain: The NLP aims to reduce logistics costs to 8 per cent by improving infra, digitalisation, and multimodal transport. MMLPs development will integrate rail, road, air, and waterways to enhance warehouse connectivity. ULIP enables real-time tracking, reducing storage inefficiencies. Both GST and NLP have transformed the sector by enabling warehouse consolidation, improving logistics infra, and reducing costs. These initiatives contribute to an efficient, resilient supply chain. ↴



Hike in engineering exports in December 2024

Trade: Export

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Million USD				% Change	
		DEC '23	APR '23-DEC '23	DEC '24	APR '24-DEC '24	DEC '24	APR '24-DEC '24
1	Tea	76.23	607.98	84.81	689.02	11.26	13.33
2	Coffee	72.46	876.84	99.18	1246.63	36.88	42.17
3	Rice	870.58	7318.58	1428.02	8725.37	64.03	19.22
4	Other cereals	25.35	454.60	42.56	190.02	67.89	-58.20
5	Tobacco	129.48	1110.57	160.50	1530.25	23.96	37.79
6	Spices	364.66	2909.24	370.95	3160.55	1.73	8.64
7	Cashew	36.23	249.44	52.78	254.92	45.70	2.20
8	Oil meals	182.88	1227.04	139.22	1015.13	-23.87	-17.27
9	Oil seeds	142.67	1031.51	141.00	1009.42	-1.17	-2.14
10	Fruits & vegetables	315.14	2512.50	327.02	2655.58	3.77	5.69
11	Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items	238.70	2089.38	261.54	2301.93	9.57	10.17
12	Marine products	624.75	5852.32	723.68	5677.02	15.83	-3.00
13	Meat, dairy & poultry products	429.58	3309.89	506.34	3646.26	17.87	10.16
14	Iron ore	573.85	2648.50	148.54	1490.84	-74.12	-43.71
15	Mica, coal & other ores, minerals, including processed minerals	393.05	3427.81	485.03	3521.50	23.40	2.73
16	Leather & leather products	353.68	3253.29	368.82	3310.70	4.28	1.76
17	Ceramic products & glassware	339.61	3265.34	366.84	2999.76	8.02	-8.13
18	Gems & jewellery	2898.50	24306.33	2130.10	21363.50	-26.51	-12.11
19	Drugs & pharmaceuticals	2477.04	20400.67	2492.55	21698.94	0.63	6.36
20	Organic & inorganic chemicals	2528.30	20231.12	2454.17	21236.39	-2.93	4.97
21	Engineering goods	10007.56	79329.49	10842.88	87216.31	8.35	9.94
22	Electronic goods	2647.85	20308.96	3577.63	26117.29	35.11	28.60
23	Cotton yarn/fabs./made-ups, handloom products etc.	937.93	8670.08	1050.31	8914.73	11.98	2.82
24	Man-made yarn/fabs./made-ups e tc.	374.57	3428.34	421.51	3610.27	12.53	5.31
25	RMG of all textiles	1295.27	10141.67	1462.26	11316.09	12.89	11.58
26	Jute mfg, including floor covering	24.97	258.93	37.85	283.93	51.63	9.66
27	Carpet	122.98	1037.94	134.23	1149.50	9.15	10.75
28	Handicrafts, excl. handmade carpet	134.54	1172.21	154.59	1319.12	14.90	12.53
29	Petroleum products	6888.76	61910.09	4916.86	49009.63	-28.62	-20.84
30	Plastic & linoleum	736.23	5928.68	780.56	6696.84	6.02	12.96
	Sub-Total	36243.39	299269.34	36162.34	303357.47	-0.22	1.37
	GRAND TOTAL	38391.03	316649.87	38010.71	321708.66	-0.99	1.60

Note 1: Exports include Re-Exports.

Note 2: The figures for DECEMBER 2024 are provisional. Note 3: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other'

(Source: Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

Petroleum imports grew in December 2024

Trade: Import

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Million USD				% Change	
		DEC '23	APR '23- DEC '23	DEC '24	APR '24- DEC '24	DEC '24	APR '24- DEC '24
1	Cotton raw & waste	29.47	498.81	142.89	918.69	384.81	84.18
2	Vegetable oil	1109.72	11638.03	1316.22	13519.28	18.61	16.16
3	Pulses	375.99	2467.93	513.70	3788.95	36.63	53.53
4	Fruits & vegetables	308.77	2176.89	328.06	2401.52	6.25	10.32
5	Pulp and waste paper	130.67	1413.79	148.36	1555.27	13.54	10.01
6	Textile yarn fabric, made-up articles	200.24	1747.04	219.65	1804.21	9.69	3.27
7	Fertilisers, crude & manufactured	1221.66	9002.09	1210.74	8173.68	-0.89	-9.20
8	Sulphur & unroasted iron pyrites	9.75	171.18	37.40	213.51	283.56	24.73
9	Metaliferrous ores & other minerals	773.75	7138.85	1138.21	8206.77	47.10	14.96
10	Coal, coke & briquettes, etc.	3451.77	29290.43	1952.85	24095.60	-43.42	-17.74
11	Petroleum, crude & products	14940.49	129973.68	15270.92	138308.19	2.21	6.41
12	Wood & wood products	569.44	4907.66	622.81	5260.29	9.37	7.19
13	Leather & leather products	93.62	748.54	82.08	750.01	-12.33	0.20
14	Organic & inorganic chemicals	2153.88	20704.70	2317.38	21526.80	7.59	3.97
15	Dyeing/tanning/colouring materials	300.65	4021.91	324.75	3221.05	8.02	-19.91
16	Artificial resins, plastic materials, etc.	1864.01	17156.64	1793.15	17212.64	-3.80	0.33
17	Chemical material & products	842.35	10275.42	1132.65	8904.73	34.46	-13.34
18	Newsprint	27.79	347.23	25.15	339.22	-9.52	-2.31
19	Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones	2193.24	17424.45	1271.57	13243.60	-42.02	-23.99
20	Iron & steel	2296.96	18005.60	1870.21	17038.72	-18.58	-5.37
21	Non-ferrous metals	1762.16	16404.55	1753.81	18791.54	-0.47	14.55
22	Machine tools	432.44	3572.08	542.06	4173.14	25.35	16.83
23	Machinery, electrical & non-electrical	4202.83	36908.58	4696.47	39671.89	11.75	7.49
24	Transport equipment	2817.84	21519.27	2790.80	22877.46	-0.96	6.31
25	Project goods	46.75	774.91	40.95	772.63	-12.40	-0.29
26	Professional instrument, optical goods, among others	743.20	5729.02	765.67	6216.79	3.02	8.51
27	Electronic goods	7609.75	65432.34	8340.20	72126.03	9.60	10.23
28	Medicinal & pharmaceutical products	748.40	6221.18	827.57	6620.77	10.58	6.42
29	Gold	3025.92	35951.24	4702.13	42087.65	55.39	17.07
30	Silver	135.68	2413.24	421.91	2754.47	210.97	14.14
	Sub-Total	54419.20	484037.26	56600.33	506575.09	4.01	4.66
	GRAND TOTAL	57151.51	506391.81	59948.18	532481.79	4.89	5.15

Note 1: Imports include Re-Imports. Note 2: The figures for DECEMBER 2024 are provisional.
Note 3: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other'.

(Source: Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

PHDCCI convention focuses on modernising rail logistics

The 11th PHDCCI Rail Convention took place recently in New Delhi. MP K.Laxman, was the guest of honour. Surendra Ahirwar, ED, Traffic Commercial, Union Ministry of Railways, Sameer Dikshit and Saran Mathur, Additional Members, Railway Board also attended the convention.



17% YoY growth in cargo tonnage at BLR Airport in 2024

Growth in cargo tonnage was driven by increased demand for perishables, spare parts, engineering goods, e-commerce, agri-perishables, ready-made garments, pharma, machinery parts, accessories and spare parts. The airport's cargo network now includes 12 freighters operating on domestic and global routes.



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Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (BLR Airport) witnessed growth in air cargo tonnage during 2024. It recorded a rise of 17 per cent year-on-year, with a growth of 23 per cent (313,981 MT) in international cargo tonnage and a 9 per cent YoY (182,246 MT) increase in domestic

The growth in cargo tonnage was driven by increased demand for perishables, spare parts and engineering goods

cargo volumes. The airport reported its highest-ever annual cargo tonnage of 496,227 MT, reflecting strong performance in international and domestic segments.

The growth in cargo tonnage was driven by increased demand for perishables, spare parts, engineering goods, and



BIAL

e-commerce shipments. During the financial year 2023-24, BLR Airport handled 439,524 MT of cargo, which saw an increase of 7.1 per cent year-on-year. The total international cargo tonnage handled during the period stood at 266,186 MT, while the domestic tonnage grew to 173,338 MT.

The airport's highest single-day cargo volume was recorded

on 11 July last with 1,884 MT processed. Agri-perishables, ready-made garments, pharma, machinery parts, accessories, and spare parts were the key commodities, which supported the unprecedented growth in cargo volumes.

BLR Airport's cargo network features 12 freighters operating on domestic and international routes. The

key export routes included Singapore, London, Frankfurt, Chicago, and Muscat, while top import routes included Shenzhen, Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Frankfurt.

BLR Airport consolidated its position as the country's top ranked airport for perishable exports for the fourth consecutive year. It processed 63,188 MT of perishables in FY 2023-24, an 18 per cent growth over PY, handling 28 per cent of the country's perishable air cargo and 44 per cent of South India's cargo.



FACT FILE

→ The growth in cargo tonnage was driven by increased demand for perishables, spare parts, engineering goods, and e-commerce shipments.



Çelebi celebrates 15 years of excellence at AAROHAN 2024

Çelebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India completed 15 years of cargo handling in India. The event was commemorated at AAROHAN 2024. Kamesh Peri, CEO, Çelebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India, said, "AAROHAN 2024 is not a celebration of our achievements but a recognition of our dedication."



17% growth in global volumes recorded at CSMIA last year

In March 2024, CSMIA's cargo terminal handled record-breaking 60,659 MT of international cargo, the highest-ever monthly volume. Festive season amplified e-commerce boom, with international shipments witnessing 53% year-on-year growth and domestic e-commerce goods, indicating an 11% increase.



CT Bureau

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) capped off 2024 on a high note, solidifying its role as a cornerstone of India's air freight network by achieving milestones in cargo operations. International volumes rose by 17 per cent. Demonstrating continued efficiency, the airport's cargo operations achieved the highest-ever daily tonnage of 204 MT, marking another milestone in the airport's commitment to enabling seamless global trade.

CSMIA's terminal achieved remarkable growth across global and domestic cargo categories. In March 2024, the cargo operations set a new milestone by handling a record-breaking 60,659 MT of international cargo, underscoring its strategic significance and operational excellence. Throughout the year, CSMIA enhanced

global connectivity, now serving 687 global destinations. This expansion included new destinations such as Tripoli, Khabarovsk, Kaliningrad, Zhukovsky, Tyumen, Damascus, Honinabi, and Chisinau. Domestically, the airport reinforced its position as a logistics hub, prioritising pharma, automobiles, dangerous goods and strengthening its role in an cargo ecosystem. Volumes were split between 55 per cent of exports and 45 per cent of imports, with London, Frankfurt, Chicago, Dubai, and Amsterdam emerging as the top destinations. On the global front, pharma, agro products, and automobile goods emerged as key drivers, recording YoY growth of 24 per cent, 22 per cent, and 20 per cent, respectively.

On the domestic front, automobile goods led with 31 per cent growth, followed by engineering goods at 22 per cent and post office mail at 15 per

The airport's digital transformation played a pivotal role in handling increasing cargo volumes

cent. The festive season amplified the e-commerce boom, with global shipments seeing a 53 per cent YoY growth and domestic e-commerce goods achieving 11 per cent increase. Agricultural exports also reached new heights, with mango shipments hitting approximately 4,700 MT.

The year was marked by the installation of 10 MT weighing scale in the export section and the renovation of the main gate with advanced security and vehicle management systems. Sustainability stood out with the destruc-

tion of 151 MT of uncleared cargo, exemplifying the airport's commitment to the environment. CSMIA's cargo operations were bolstered by the addition of six new airlines in 2024, including Kenya Airways, SF Airlines, and SolitAir, enhancing capacity and linkage. The airport's digital transformation played a pivotal role in handling increasing cargo volumes. Systems such as Air Cargo Community System (AMAX) and the D-Cube platform for digital import delivery streamlined operations, reduced paper usage, and minimised dwell time.

The Turant mobile application offers real-time shipment tracking for temperature-controlled cargo, ensuring seamless operations. As India's industry expects continued growth in 2025, CSMIA is committed to advancing its capabilities, driving efficiency, and setting new benchmarks in the cargo landscape. 🌟

Air cargo industry shines at grand Annual Ball 2025

Air Cargo Club of Delhi (ACCD) hosted an entertainment evening for the club members and their spouses recently in New Delhi. The guests were treated to a night of luxury, where key players gathered to celebrate achievements, discuss future trends and strengthen professional relationships.





'We see potential in Indian contract logistics market'

India is vibrant market from an investment perspective as all indicators are pointing in right direction. We feel we can become valuable partner and can contribute to development of industry. We are looking at that market with a lot of attention, says **Gianfranco Sgro, EVP, Contract Logistics, Kuehne+Nagel Group**.



How do you see Indian logistics sector evolving?

The logistic industry in India is probably one of the most vibrant geographies where we operate. The logistics sector-demands or sometimes anticipates customer behaviour and manufacturing behaviour. India is known to be probably one of the most dynamic countries in term of manufacturing and evolution of the consumer approach. And this is generating interesting dynamic for our industry. Kuehne+Nagel is well equipped in that direction because we can support both the Indian and global customers. So, Contract Logistics, fulfilment and delivery are our key focus areas.

Brief us about the scope of contract logistics sector in India?

The Contract Logistics sector deals with the domestic consumption. This is subjected to a single digit or double-digit growth. And these are by far the dynamic numbers that you can see on a global scale. So, from growth and competence perspective, Contract Logis-



Gianfranco Sgro
Executive Vice President, Contract Logistics, Kuehne+Nagel Group

“India is an important market for us from an investment perspective. We are eyeing growing healthcare sector.”

tics is interesting. There is a growing need of digitalisation, automation, sustainability, and new solutions.

If we look at the vertical component, the consumer plays an important role and has strong dynamics. We are also a global leader in the healthcare distribution. We are looking at healthcare sector in India very carefully.

How do you look at India as a potential investment destination?

India is an important market for us from an investment perspective, because all the indicators are pointing in the right

same focus is on our Contract Logistics business as well. All our new installations are designed to the highest standards, optimising energy usage, minimising plastic consumption, and conserving water. These principles are central to our commitment to sustainability. The more we can



direction. India is important not only from a return-on-investment perspective, but also, we feel that Kuehne+Nagel can be a valuable partner and can contribute to the development of the logistics industry in India. We have invested heavily in our people, solutions, footprint, we are growing by 150,000 square metres per annum in term of installation in tier I, tier II, and tier III cities.

leverage data, the best we can optimise the supply chain. Our integrated logistics offering is exactly in that direction, providing end-to-end solutions to reduce emissions.

Any plans to expand your trade and network here?

India is a fast-growing market. It offers best-in-class solutions in terms of infrastructure and technology. Infrastructure is improving here at great pace. As a global firm, we must tap on these areas, and this will be a key part of our success. India is among the top 10 countries in our company in term of presence, but there is absolutely no doubt in saying that it will be soon in the top five. 🚀

How crucial is sustainability for your business operations?

Sustainability is a key aspect of the logistic development and is becoming a strong pillar. We are investing in sustainable solutions for all our products, in air logistics, and sea logistics, with the access to biofuels. The

Services

- Sustainability is a key aspect of logistic development and is becoming a strong pillar
- India offers best-in-class solutions in terms of infrastructure and technology

Highlights

- The more we can leverage data, the best we can optimise the supply chain
- Contract Logistics sector deals with domestic consumption which is subjected to single digit or double-digit growth

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Optimising air cargo: GSSAs' shaping future of air freight

By continuously adapting to evolving market dynamics and integrating digital transformation, General Sales and Service Agents (GSSAs) help airlines maintain a competitive edge, while focusing on their core business operations, says **Pramod Menon, Vice President, Cargo, Rainbow Aviation.**



How do GSSAs act as catalysts for innovation and efficiency in the air cargo business?

GSSAs play a crucial role in driving innovation and efficiency in the air cargo industry by implementing advanced technological solutions and data-driven strategies. With the increasing demand for speed and cost-effectiveness, GSSAs optimise cargo capacity utilisation and streamline operations through automated booking systems, demand forecasting, and real-time tracking solutions.

These technological innovations help airlines reduce costs, enhance cargo handling efficiency, and improve turnaround times. By continuously adapting to evolving market dynamics and integrating digital transformation, GSSAs help airlines maintain a competitive edge, while focusing on their core business operations. Furthermore, their expertise in revenue management allows airlines to optimise pricing strategies, ensuring maximum profitability, while maintaining service excellence.

How are GSSAs improving service delivery in the air cargo industry?

GSSAs enhance service delivery by providing a comprehensive suite of services that include sales, marketing, operational support, and customer service. By acting as a bridge between airlines and freight



Pramod Menon
Vice President – Cargo
Rainbow Aviation

“GSSAs play key role in altering ops by fostering seamless connectivity and enhancing market accessibility.”

forwarders, they ensure seamless coordination and communication across the supply chain. Their extensive experience in logistics management enables them to handle documentation, customs clearance, and regulatory compliance efficiently, reducing transit times and minimising operational bottlenecks.

GSSAs have established relationships with local and global partners, allowing them to offer customised solutions tailored to specific market needs. Their ability to manage fluctuating demand and adjust operational strategies ensures that service levels remain high even in volatile market conditions. By delivering flexible and reliable services, GSSAs contribute to enhancing customer satisfaction and

fostering long-term business partnerships in the global air cargo industry.

What role do GSSAs play in transforming air cargo efficiency and global connectivity?

GSSAs are instrumental in expanding airline reach and enhancing global connectivity by facilitating access to new and emerging markets. With their extensive knowledge of regional markets and established logistics networks, they help airlines penetrate international trade hubs with ease.

GSSAs handle regulatory requirements, customs procedures, and local market intricacies, ensuring smooth and efficient cargo operations worldwide. By leveraging their partnerships with various stakeholders, including freight forwarders, airports, and government agencies, GSSAs contribute to optimising trade routes and enhancing overall sup-

ply chain efficiency. This global presence enables airlines to offer competitive pricing, increase cargo volumes, and strengthen international trade relationships. Ultimately, GSSAs play a significant role in transforming the industry's operations by fostering seamless connectivity, enhancing market accessibility, and ensuring the smooth flow of goods across borders.



BACC's 7th Annual Ball: An evening of celebration, camaraderie & recognition

7th Annual Ball of Bangalore Air Cargo Club (BACC) 2025 will take place at Hotel Taj in Bengaluru on 8 March 2025. One of the most prominent events in the Indian air cargo calendar, will bring together prominent figures from the industry under one roof, for an evening of celebrations, entertainment and endless opportunities.

One of the most prominent events in the Indian Air Cargo calendar will bring together prominent figures from the industry under one roof, for an evening of celebrations, entertainment and endless opportunities. The event is renowned for showcasing the power of collaboration and camaraderie within the air cargo industry. It provides an opportunity for the industry stalwarts representing airlines, cargo handlers, and government officials, to foster collaborations, exchange ideas and recognise their contributions made for the betterment of the

air cargo sector. The Bangalore Air Cargo Club Annual Ball 2025 will not only celebrate the achievements of the past year but will also highlight the opportunities that lie ahead, as the sector continues to evolve and adapt to new challenges. With a resounding success of the Annual Ball BACC 2024, it is anticipated that the event will only get bigger and better than the previous year. The whole industry is gearing up to witness the mesmerising evening of 8th March 2025, when the 7th Annual Ball BACC (Bangalore Air Cargo Club) 2025 will shine in all its grandeur.



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2025 Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

12-15 Warehousing & Logistics Asia Summit

BITEC, Bangkok
Thailand

13-15 LogiMAT India 2025

Bombay Exhibition Centre
Mumbai

20-22 13th Logistics Event of India

Pragati Maidan,
New Delhi

14-17 Warehousing & Intra Logistics Expo

Bittan Market Ground
Bhopal

MARCH

11-12 Mega Cargo Show

Jio World Convention
Centre, Bandra Kurla
Complex, Mumbai

APRIL

8-11 LogiPharma 2025

Lyon Convention Centre
Lyon, France

15-17 IATA World Cargo Symposium 2025

Dubai World Trade Centre
UAE

MAY

21-24 FIATA RAP 2025

Aerocity
Delhi

JUNE

26-28 India Warehousing Show 2025

IICC India International
Convention and Expo
Centre, New Delhi

OCTOBER

6-10 FIATA World Congress 2025

National Convention Centre,
Hanoi, Vietnam

NOVEMBER

4-6 TIACA Air Cargo Forum 2025

Abu Dhabi Yas Island
UAE



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

Blue Dart unveils new green facility in Bijwasan, Delhi

Blue Dart has launched low-emission integrated operating facility in Bijwasan, Delhi. This facility, equipped with solar power installations, links multiple air and ground services between North India and the rest of India, marking a milestone in the company's journey toward operational excellence and environmental stewardship. Situated along the Dwarka Expressway, the facility enjoys a prime location

and is set to be 20 minutes from IGI Airport. This positions it as a critical logistics hub, enhancing connectivity across the Northern region and beyond. With direct access to the IGI Airport, Indian Railways, metro corridors, and key national highways, the Bijwasan facility seamlessly integrates with the upcoming Gati Shakti Logistics Corridor.



(Left to Right) Balfour Manuel, Managing Director, Blue Dart; Tobias Meyer, CEO, DHL Group; Pablo Ciano, CEO, DHL eCommerce & Blue Dart, Vikas Patel Regional Head, North, Blue Dart

ASL signs agreement for industrial park in Ahmedabad



Arvind SmartSpaces (ASL) announced it has signed an agreement for a large industrial park in Ahmedabad, with a total estimated area of 440 acre and a topline potential of ₹1,350 crore. This mega project is located on NH-47, between Bavla and Bagodara. The project is signed under joint development model. It is located at a tri-junction that connects the project to Saurashtra region, Vadodara, Ahmedabad and

ports such as Kandla, Mundra and Pipavav. The project is also located close to DFC and the upcoming Dholera Special Investment Region.

There are several large industries in close vicinity, which are focused on pharmaceuticals, engineering, renewables, engineering, logistics and ancillaries. The micro-market is home to several large industries and industrial parks.



Trendsetters of the month



Adani Hazira Port unveiled state-of-the-art 450 KLD effluent treatment plant.

The post received
1,096 likes



Qatar Airways Cargo shared a video showcasing their cargo operations. The video received 400K views and close to

14K likes



Indigo's post on being the first airline to land at the Navi Mumbai International Airport churned out

2,500 likes

The post was reposted
125 times



DHL Express & GJEPC inked an MoU to simplify jewellery exports from India.

The post collected
4,100 likes



Maersk posted the arrival of the 777F at European air hub in Billund, Denmark. The post was viewed by more than

32K users

It got more than
1,300 likes



Qatar Airways Cargo announced a digitalisation partnership with Unilode Aviation Solutions. The post garnered

2,474 likes

AI advancing your cargo business



Nvidia's AI solution—transforming warehousing

In the highly competitive logistics market, it has become crucial for the players to integrate innovative solutions to streamline the operations. Nvidia's GPU-powered solution is one such revolutionary tool, which assists users in integrating, automating, and managing the flow of products in fulfillment or distribution centres. With the help of this solution automation, management and operations become more efficient, and it increases the accuracy of order picked, packed, and shipped.

Warehouse simulation to boost productivity

Nvidia Omniverse is a cooperative platform that enables businesses to simulate their entire ware-

house, run multiple scenarios—such as increased demand during holidays or constrained time windows—and optimises the results. Retailers can utilise digital twins of their warehouses to discover how even small adjustments will impact operations before they make substantive investments.

AI boosts operations in warehouses

Smart warehouses are using AI-at-the-edge technologies to automate inventory processes, simplify general package handling, and optimise real estate when receiving orders and sending packages to other distribution centres.

Key features of Nvidia's AI Tool

- It helps in route optimisation by analysing real-time traffic, weather conditions, and previous data



- Nvidia's tool can process data from sensors on trucks, planes, or other cargo vehicles to detect issues before they become critical. This leads to higher operational efficiency
- Nvidia's AI tool can analyse and forecast demand, enabling cargo businesses to optimise inventory levels and improve warehouse management
- Computer vision systems can be implemented to inspect products for damage during the supply chain process. It will ensure enhanced quality control
- AI-based monitoring systems can detect potential safety hazards such as obstacles, worker movements, or malfunctioning equipment, helping to prevent accidents

Movements

ECOM EXPRESS India



Kammal Daas has been appointed as the VP, Operations, Last Mile, at Ecom Express. His role will be to strengthen operational capabilities and drive efficiency across last-mile delivery process. Daas brings over 18 years of experience.

HANS INFOMATIC India



Shivbrata Bose has joined Hans Infomatic as its VP, Sales and Marketing. With 20 years of expertise in sales, business development, and forwarding, Bose is an ideal fit for the role. Previously, he has held leadership roles at Ecom Express.

SEKO LOGISTICS India



Srinivasan Anandhan has been appointed as the Director, Operations, SEKO India. Anandhan, who has 30 years experience, in his new role will drive the excellence at SEKO India and curate plans for customer-friendly innovative solutions.

GMR GROUP India



Neeraj Bhalla has been appointed as the Chief Transformation Officer, Corporate & Energy, GMR Group. He will spearhead initiatives aimed at fostering growth and driving impactful transformations across corporate and energy verticals.

ALLCARGO GATI India



Narayanam Sessa Srikanth has been elevated to the position of Head, Human, Gati Express & Supply Chain. With over two decades of experience, he brings a wealth of expertise to the new role. Srikanth is an integral part of the Allcargo Gati team.

HAIKO LOGISTICS INDIA India



Gautam Arora has been appointed as the CEO, Haiko Logistics India. In his new role, he will implement business strategies, overseeing operations to ensure company's growth. Earlier, he served as the VP, Air Freight, SAR Logistics.

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