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TIER II & III CITIES

turning into air cargo hubs



Commitment to partnerships at
FIATA RAP Meet

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INDIA SUSPENDS TRADE LINK FOR BANGLADESH

India has suspended the transshipment hub for Bangladeshi cargo in a move aimed at easing congestion at its key airports. The facility allowed Bangladeshi goods, especially air cargo, to transit through Indian airports en route to third world countries. Following this move, the government stated priority should be accorded to domestic cargo handling.



 Ritika Arora Bhola

The Indian air cargo traders have embraced the Union government's decision to suspend the transshipment facility for Bangladeshi cargo, citing it as a timely intervention to address severe congestion issues at major Indian airports such as airports in Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

Over the past few years, India's major air cargo hubs—Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata—have experienced more pressure due to a surge in domestic and global freight volumes. The addition of transshipped cargo from Bangladesh, which used Indian airports as transit points for exports to third countries, further strained the stretched infrastructure

and slowed down processing times of Indian cargo.


Traders and logistics operators voiced concerns about delayed shipments, limited warehouse space and bottlenecks affecting service efficiency and increasing operational costs. With the suspension of the transshipment facility, stakeholders in the Indian cargo sector anticipated quicker TATs, better resource allocation and improved throughput at terminals. There have been reports stating political reasons behind such a decision.

Bangladesh is getting closer to China by inviting its investment to revitalise the Lalmonirhat airbase situated in north-western Bangladesh. The airbase is near India's Sikkim, the districts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar

in West Bengal and narrow Siliguri Corridor linking India's Northeast with the rest of India, and thus it is likely to pose security threat in a politically sensitive region, prone to insurgencies.

With this decision, the exporters could be benefited by reduced competition with Bangladeshi goods by exploring fresh trade openings, which may lead to an enhanced sales and market

share. With transshipment streamlined, there is a chance to reallocate air cargo resources to priority sectors such as pharma, electronics, automotive parts and engineering goods, which support India's vision of becoming a manufacturing powerhouse. Many view this shift as a necessary measure to safeguard India's trade logistics ecosystem and enhance competitiveness, especially as it looks to scale up its role as a global logistics hub.

While acknowledging the potential diplomatic and regional trade implications of the move, Indian air cargo professionals believe the benefits to domestic cargo flow and airport efficiency justify the decision. Industry professionals told  that it is a win-win situation now for the Indian cargo operators.

AT A GLANCE

- Logistics operators voiced concerns about delay and limited warehouse space.
- Now exporters would benefit from reduced competition with Bangladeshi goods.



Exporters up for gains due to facility's closure

“ Besides political reasons, the facility created congestion at key Indian airports. Logistical delays and higher costs were affecting Indian exporters, resulting in backlogs. The exporters were at a disadvantage for not getting enough cargo space. Exporters are up for major gains as they will offer business stability so, export orders will be diverted to India. With congestion easing, freight charges may come down. With the current turmoil of US tariffs hitting trade between USA and China, capacity of airline hubs is wide open, and this may result in reduction of freight rates.”



Dipen Lalsodagar
Deputy Director, Cargo Sales,
Global Aviation Services

With current US tariffs hitting trade between USA & China, it may result in fall in freight rates



Reassess routing strategies for logistics

“ Policy shifts affecting cross-border logistics and dynamics underline the need for agile and harmonised supply chain planning. While the decision alters existing cargo flows, it presents an opportunity for logistics providers to reassess routing strategies and fortify multimodal linkage across the subcontinent. We are committed to ensuring service continuity by working closely with customers, customs authorities and local partners to navigate evolving regulatory landscape. Our focus remains on delivering solutions supporting trade in the subcontinent.”



Huned Gandhi
MD, Air and Sea Logistics,
India Subcontinent
Dachser India

Focus will be on delivering solutions supporting trade in the subcontinent

India seeks to manage its trade imbalance

“ By suspending the transit link for Bangladeshi goods through Indian ports, India seeks to minimise its exposure to security risks, manage trade imbalance and provide a level playing field to its domestic exports and streamline supply chains. Exporters could benefit from reduced competition as this move would limit influx of Bangladeshi goods into global markets. This move will favour textiles, ready-made garments, jute products, leather bags and pharma sectors. By reducing foreign volumes transiting through Indian ports and airports, domestic shipments may face fewer delays and bottlenecks.”



Abhishek Goyal
CEO & Executive Director,
Aeroprime Group

The closure of the link would limit influx of Bangladeshi goods into global markets

Exporters to benefit from more cargo space

“ With closure of the facility in India for Bangladeshi goods, local exporters stand to be benefited by reduced competition, an enhanced sales and more cargo space. This could be helpful in sectors where India has an advantage, and Bangladesh previously held a significant share. It would be advantageous for the exporters to get lower freight costs from carriers. Such a move by India may provide logistical advantage due to availability of space on the carriers at cheaper freight rate since demand would be pruned due to no movement of goods from Bangladesh.”



Sunil Kohli
MD,
Rahat Cargo

It would also be advantageous for the Indian exporters to get lower freight costs

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Allocate cargo resources to priority sectors

“ The govt’s move has come as a blessing in disguise. Closure of the facility for export of Bangladeshi goods to third world nations may bring short-term volumes and revenue losses to those carriers and terminal operators, who previously handled Bangladesh cargo. This reallocation supports long-term efficiency gains for India’s exporters. The coming months will test how India fortifies its export ecosystem, while preserving regional diplomatic finesse. With transshipment streamlined, there is an opportunity to reallocate resources to priority sectors such as pharma, electronics, engineering goods etc.”



Balagopal Balachandran
National Head
Air Freight
FEI Cargo

The coming months will test how the country fortifies its export ecosystem

Move would streamline air cargo operations

“ The Union government’s decision to suspend the transshipment facility for export volumes from Bangladesh aims to reduce congestion at important ports and airports. The government’s decision is expected to streamline air cargo operations, enhance port efficiency and ensure smoother handling of domestic and international air cargo. By alleviating the pressure on infrastructure, it will not only improve turnaround times (TATs) and optimise resource utilisation but also contribute to a more efficient logistics ecosystem for the country and Bangladesh in the long run.”



CK Govil
CMD
Activair Airfreight

This move is likely to streamline cargo ops and enhance port efficiency

Reduced volumes may stabilise freight rates

“ The government suspended the transshipment facility as it delayed cargo handling, which led to booking cancellations for Indian exporters. The surge in demand also prompted airlines to increase freight rates, which added to financial strain. Mandatory 100 per cent customs checks for Bangladesh cargo overstretched airport infra and delayed processing times. The suspension of the facility eases pressure on Indian exporters, especially in competitive sectors. Reduced cargo volumes may stabilise freight rates and help the country’s goods regain price competitiveness in global markets.”



Vipin Vohra
Chairman
Continental Carriers

The suspension of the facility eases pressure on Indian exporters in competitive sectors

Closure stresses India’s economic interests

“ The government’s decision to close the facility for Bangladeshi exports via India’s land borders and Delhi Air Cargo Complex aims to alleviate congestion and increase competitiveness of domestic exporters. The Apparel Export Promotion Council highlighted the influx of 20 to 30 Bangladeshi trucks daily into New Delhi caused delays, increased air freight rates and strained logistics amid the Red Sea conflict. While this move may strain bilateral trade ties and affect Bangladesh’s export routes, it stresses India’s need to prioritise its economic interests and logistics efficiency.”



Xerrxes Master
MD
Master Groups

The facility’s suspension stresses India’s need to prioritise its economic interests

Now, exporters can deliver goods on time

“ As per estimates, 18 per cent of Bangladesh’s garments cargo was flown through Indian airports. Bangladesh exports 3,400 tonnes of garments by air per week, with 600 tonnes flown through Indian airports. The congestion and chaos created at the airport resulted in Indian cargo being delayed, missing flights, delay in clearances, increased freight rates and no or little space on the carrier. Bangladeshi goods were being given priority over Indian goods causing severe losses to Indian exporters. This move will help regularise freight rates and let exporters meet deadlines.”



Chaitaly Mehta
Director
EKF Global

Bangladeshi goods were being given priority over India causing losses to Indian exporters





Embargo could give competitive edge to India

“Discontinuation of the facility will reduce customs agents’ workload related to processing, potentially affecting their earnings and employment stability. Indian exporters who have raised concerns regarding congested terminal warehouses may now benefit from increased availability of space for consolidation of export cargo. Airport security personnel, especially screeners operating under the BCAS norms for shipments from third-world nations, may also experience reduced pressure. This embargo could provide a competitive edge to Indian exporters, especially in the apparel sector, by mitigating external competition.”



Debajyoti Bagchi
VP, Business
Development, TT Group

Exporters who raised concerns regarding crowded terminal warehouses may now benefit

Forwarders will now get more space for exports

“Highlighting the need for a stable and secure trading environment, because of the heavy movement of cargo from Bangladesh to Delhi and Bengaluru, the airlines charge high rates, which affects the Indian exporters, who are difficult to move goods in India with hike in freight rates. The embargo will rationalise freight rates, reduce transport costs for Indian exporters, and ease airport congestion. Indian freight forwarders will now get more space for their exporters. India and Bangladesh are competitors when it comes to apparel exports to the Middle East and the West.”



Afzal Malbarwala
MD
Galaxy Freight

The embargo will rationalise freight rates and also reduce transportation costs

Less congestion to perk up logistics efficiency

“India’s decision to halt the facility for Bangladeshi exports is rooted in concerns of port congestion at Kolkata and Haldia. It marks a pause to recalibrate regional logistics protocols. For Indian exporters, reduced competition in sectors such as garments provides short-term pricing and market share. Logistics efficiency may improve due to reduced congestion and better port infra. The move may strain India-Bangladesh ties, reduce volumes and lower revenues for ports who handled transshipment traffic. Indian logistics firms relied on this volume to maintain service consistency.”



Kamal Jain
Director
Cargomen Logistics

For exporters, reduced competition provides short-term pricing and market share

Blessing in disguise for Indian exporters

“The move reflects a strategic shift to protect national trade interests, especially in textiles, at corridors such as Kolkata and Delhi ICDs. Indian exporters, especially MSMEs, will get some breathing space. Reduced competition would help improve margins, while less congestion means faster clearances and cargo availability for Indian firms. This shift could be a turning point for Indian exporters. With less congestion, cargo flows faster, reducing delays, demurrage and missed deadlines. To capitalise on this, exporters and forwarders must be operationally agile.”



Kunal Maheshwari
Chief Growth Officer
Softlink Global

Now, cargo movement would be faster, reducing delays, demurrage and missed deadlines

Tier II & III cities get govt push as air cargo hubs

Govt is developing tier II & III cities as cargo hubs to lighten burden of metros and facilitate domestic cargo flow. Surat, Ranchi, Nagpur and Coimbatore are witnessing cargo facilities, enabling faster cargo movement. Increasing linkage of mofussil to gateway airports improving efficiency of perishables exports.



Ritika Arora Bhola

Developing tier II and III cities as cargo hubs can boost regional economies and ease pressure on overburdened metropolitan logistics networks. With improving infrastructure, lowering real estate costs and growing industrial activity in these areas offer an advantage for air cargo movement and storage.

Enhancing connectivity through road, rail and air links, along with investment in automation can transform these cities into efficient, decentral-

ised hubs supporting faster and more cost-effective supply chain operations across India.

Under Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) and UDAN 2.0 initiatives, 400 small airports and airstrips have been connected with 60 regional airports now handling cargo, reducing logistics costs for SMEs by up to 25 per cent. Examples include the MIHAN project in Nagpur and the expanded terminal in Surat.

The ₹25,000 crore AAI infrastructure programme is all set to upgrade 50 airports by 2025. In addition, over 35

A strong momentum is seen through PMGS & NLP initiatives, which prioritise developing multimodal logistics infra in non-metros

MMLPs aim to reduce last-mile delays and improve supply chain efficiency. Private investments have boosted pharma capacity by 40 per cent and are supporting temperature-sensitive logistics.

Surat, Ranchi, Nagpur and Coimbatore are witnessing improved cargo facilities, enabling faster shipments of cargo. As per experts, a strong momentum is also seen through PMGS and NLP initiatives, both of which prioritise developing multimodal logistics infra in non-metro regions. These efforts are aimed at linking regional production hubs such as textile clusters,

industrial parks and agri zones to national and global markets via air. The increasing connectivity of the mofussil airports to the gateway airports improves the efficiency of export activity for perishables.

Drone logistics pilots and startup-led innovations are also being tested in tier II and III cities. Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are already grappling with congestion driven by rapid growth in cargo volumes and infrastructure that has not always kept pace. High logistics costs, limited freighter capacity and slower customs clearance compared to global benchmarks continue to strain operations. Initiatives such as Krishi Udan are promoting agricultural exports, while investment in airport capacity, cold chain networks, and digital infrastructure are enabling smaller cities to handle freight with greater efficiency.

CRIB discusses with industry leaders if tier II and III cities have the potential to emerge as air cargo hubs to boost trade.



Highlights

- Nagpur, Coimbatore, Ranchi and Surat are witnessing improved cargo facilities and faster movement
- Increasing connectivity improves efficiency of exports

Innovation

- Tier III cities such as Nagpur, Surat and Guwahati will benefit from AFSs and MMLPs
- Drone logistics pilots and start-up-led innovations are being tested in remote regions





Linking metro, regional airports cut logistics costs

“Initiatives have been taken to back India’s push to develop tier II and III cities as emerging cargo hubs to decongest metros. Under UDAN and UDAN 2.0, 400 small airports and airstrips were linked with 60 regional airports handling cargo and reducing logistics costs for SMEs by 25 per cent. Examples include the MIHAN project in Nagpur and the expanded terminal in Surat. The ₹25,000 crore AAI infrastructure programme is set to upgrade 50 airports this year. Thirty-five MMLPs aim to reduce last-mile delays and improve supply chain efficiency.”



Keku Bomi Gazder
CEO and MD
Aviapro Logistic Services

Thirty-five MMLPs aim to reduce last-mile delays and improve supply chain efficiency



AAI to upgrade infra in tier II and III cities

“Aviation sector is going through a growing phase, shifting from traditional metro hubs to expanding into tier II and III cities. This shift is poised to add to growth of logistics sector. The govt is taking steps to develop cities beyond metros as emerging cargo hubs. The AAI is focusing on upgrading infra in tier II and III cities, expanding terminals, warehousing capacity, and good runways. Nagpur, Coimbatore, Ranchi and Surat are witnessing improved cargo facilities, enabling faster cargo movement. Udan 2.0 and UDAN are aiding regional producers to link with global markets.”



Malcom Dsouza
Director, Air Freight and
Member, Board of Advisors
Jeena and Company

The govt is taking steps to develop cities beyond tier I cities as emerging cargo hubs

More airports developed as greenfield airports

“ India has recognised the importance of expanding its domestic air cargo ecosystem beyond metros by developing tier II and III cities as emerging cargo hubs. Under UDAN, which focuses on improving regional air linkage many smaller airports have been upgraded to handle cargo and passenger traffic. More airports are being developed as greenfield projects. These efforts are aimed at linking regional production hubs to national and international markets via air. Indore, Lucknow, Coimbatore, and Guwahati and other centres are emerging as cargo nodes.”



Amit Tandon
CEO & Managing Director,
Asia Shipping India

Under UDAN, smaller airports have been upgraded to handle cargo and passenger traffic



Exporters fortifying supply chain network

“ Investments are being channelled into specialised warehousing for e-commerce, perishables, and pharma, thus creating new opportunities for Indian exporters are strengthening domestic supply chains. While prospects are strong, challenges persist in multimodal linkage and last-mile logistics. DP World has developed an integrated ecosystem comprising three free trade warehousing zones, 5 million sq. ft. of warehousing space, and 15,000-pincode express network. The firm is enhancing linkage between ports, airports & hinterland markets.”



Zeeshan Mukhi
Vice President, Freight
Forwarding, Subcontinent
DP World

While prospects are strong, challenges persist in multimodal linkage and last-mile logistics

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Cargo connectivity to key markets improving

“India is focusing on developing tier II and III cities as air cargo hubs to alleviate pressure on Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. This is important as demand for cargo services continues to rise due to the growth of e-commerce, manufacturing and exports. The public and private sector are undertaking initiatives to develop these cities as viable cargo hubs. Some of them include expansion of regional airports and infra development, dedicated cargo hubs among others. Developing tier II and III cities as emerging cargo hubs is driven by policies and private investments.”



Rajen Bhatia
Managing Director
Tulsidas Khimji

Alleviating pressure on Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru airports is vital for cargo

Aim is to ease pressure on major cargo hubs

“India is developing air cargo infrastructure beyond metro cities. Tier II cities such as Pune, Jaipur, and Lucknow are emerging as key freight centres, while Nagpur, Surat, and Guwahati will benefit from AFSs and MMLPs. This will enhance trade accessibility, reduce costs and diversify the air freight ecosystem. Drone logistics pilots and startup-led innovations are being tested in tier II and III cities. Opportunities remain to enhance efficiency across key cargo hubs. Building road, rail, and inland ports linkages could ease pressure on key hubs.”



Deepak Kumar
National Air Logistics
Manager, K+N India, Sri
Lanka and the Maldives

Building road, rail and inland ports connectivity could ease pressure on key cargo hubs

Govt laying stress on advanced technology

“There is a focus on developing tier II and III cities such as Nagpur, Lucknow and Coimbatore as emerging air cargo hubs. The government is leveraging greenfield airport projects and repurposing former military airfields to expand capacity beyond the metros. Budget 2025 highlighted on digitalisation—Artificial Intelligence, blockchain and end-to-end visibility tools—and sustainability investments in order to boost competitiveness of smaller hubs. The goal is clear: To decentralise logistics and reduce pressure on key and major gateways.”



Reshma Zaheer
CEO, TT Cargo and
Logistics (TT Group)

The goal is clear: To decentralise logistics and reduce pressure on major gateways

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Commitment to partnerships as FIATA RAP Meet concludes

The strong turnout and active engagement underscored the industry's synergy to innovation, marking the conclusion of high-fi industry gathering. Industry professionals, technology providers convened to address issues such as digital transformation, sustainability and capacity challenges in air cargo sector.



Piyush Srivastava, Senior Economic Advisor, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, Surjit Bhujabal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Turgut Erkeskin, President, FIATA, CK Govil, President, ACAA, and Samir J Shah, VP, ACAA among others at the lamp lighting ceremony



Ritika Arora Bhola

The FIATA RAP Meet 2025 concluded on a high note, with participation from all key players across the global logistics and air cargo sectors. The event brought together a diverse and influential audience, including stakeholders of logistics and air cargo industry.

The opening sessions focused discussions, innovations and partnerships emerging in the past few years. Industry professionals, technology providers convened to address issues such as digital transformation, sustainability and capacity challenges in air cargo sector. They emphasised on the MSMEs and startups and their impact in boosting Gross Domestic Product (GDP), transshipment hubs,



multimodal linkage and regulatory policies.

The keynote speech and panel discussions emphasised the importance of AI, automation, green logistics solutions and stressed upon current geopolitical and geo-economic issues such as tar-

iff wars, Indo-Pak tensions, supply chain disruptions due to slowdown, among others. The closing sessions stressed the collaborative spirit defining the event wherein FIATA members presented their reports and plans. Participants aligned on shared goals such as enhancing supply chain resilience, accelerating digital transformation and advancing sustainability initiatives and improved connectivity and efficiency through redefined alliances and trade lanes.

The strong turnout and active engagement underscored the industry's commitment to innovation and partnership, marking a conclusion to a pivotal gathering for the global air cargo community.

Piyush Srivastava, Senior Economic Advisor, Union

Keynote speech and panel discussions emphasised the importance of AI, automation, green logistics solutions

Ministry of Civil Aviation, Surjit Bhujabal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs were the Chief Guests. They performed the lamp lighting along with other dignitaries such as Turgut Erkeskin, President FIATA, CK Govil, President ACAA, and Bui Trung Thuong, Trade Counsellor, Embassy of Vietnam. MR Venkatesh, Eminent Economist delivered the keynote address, while Samir J Shah, Vice President, ACAA gave the Vote of Thanks.

In his speech, Srivastava said, “The initiatives taken by the Union government to promote air cargo and logistics trade such as PMGS and NLP are known worldwide. Today, we have over 100 cargo facilities across India to facilitate trade and efficient cargo movement. We are focusing on ease of doing business (EoDB) with the help of Union Ministries of Finance and Commerce.”

“Last year, we ordered several aircraft to improve connectivity. We have UDAN scheme in place to boost regional connectivity, pax operations and belly capacities for cargo movement. We have also allowed non-scheduled freighter operations in India, which means any international carrier can land at Indian airports at any time. FIATA and ACAAI together have done great job by organising this event, which will help the industry stakeholders to come along, collaborate and discuss new ideas and innovate,” Srivastava added.

Turgut Erkeskin averred, “I would like to extend my gratitude to ACAAI and the air cargo agents. ACAAI has played a significant role in the development of India’s air freight business. Their commitment to promoting standards, capacity building and advocacy has contributed to India’s growing promise in global logistics. We will focus on sustainability,



Overall, the FIATA RAP event wrapped up with success, marked by the active participation of global stakeholders

green logistics, digitalisation and technology integration, resilience and supply chain instructions, e-commerce and last-mile deliveries, and trade policies. Our responsibility is to empower our members to ensure freight forwarders and logistics service providers can operate with efficiency, integrity and resilience in a complex world that they are living in.”

The Chairman of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said, “India is

well positioned to take up challenges and take India on a high growth pedestal, including digitalisation, capacity building, coordination and collaborations.

Customs is in a strong position and is providing necessary support we need in international trade. India has a lot of potential to become global cargo hub with new infrastructure building up, new facilities coming and air cargo industry wanting to have more space and improved connectivity both in courier as well as standard cargo transfers.

Thuong added, that “India has become a potential trade and investment destination. With Prime Minister Modi’s Viksit Bharat 2047 ambition, the trade is growing and we would like to work more closely with India.”

The ACAAI President commented, “India’s air cargo trade is witnessing remarkable growth, driven by rapid digitalisation, a strong focus on sustainability, and increased collaboration across the supply chain. By embracing advanced technologies, streamlining operations, and implementing green logistics practices, India has significantly enhanced efficiency and resilience in its cargo ecosystem. These progressive efforts have positioned India as a benchmark in the Asia-Pacific region, setting new standards for innovation and integrated growth in the air freight sector.”

Overall, the FIATA RAP event wrapped up with resounding success, marked by the active participation of stakeholders from every corner of the logistics and air cargo sectors. The event fostered meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and strategic alignment on the industry’s most pressing challenges and future opportunities.

With contributions from freight operators, logistics providers, technology innovators, and regulatory authorities, the event underscored a united commitment to driving progress and innovation in international air cargo.

This inclusive and forward-looking participation ensured the event concluded not just as a gathering, but as a catalyst for lasting industry transformation.



Piyush Srivastava, Senior Economic Advisor, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation addressing the meet

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AI agentification: Digital diplomats bridging the gap

AI in logistics is growing with buzz around generative AI and AI related tools. Logistics industry is benefactor of AI applications as on date. For an industry grappling managing multifaceted supply chains and shifting market demands, AI is turning the table around, says **Tribhuwan Negi, CTO, Kale Logistics Solutions**.

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) in logistics market is expected to be valued at US\$ 707.74 billion by 2034 with a growth of nearly 44 per cent in the next few years. As digital transformation accelerates, a new paradigm is emerging at the intersection of artificial intelligence and automation—AI agentification.

UNDERSTANDING AI AGENTIFICATION

At its core, AI agentification involves deploying autonomous digital agents specialised software programmes equipped with AI to perform tasks, interpret data, and make real-time decisions traditionally carried out by humans. In logistics, this means streamlining everything from order processing and inventory management to route optimisation and customer communications.

REDEFINING SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATIONS

Conventionally, logistics operations have been bogged down by repetitive manual tasks, siloed data, and slow information flows. AI agents break down these barriers by serving as digital intermediaries at each touchpoint. For instance, instead of manually assigning deliveries to trucks or tracking shipments through spreadsheets, AI agents autonomously coordinate schedules, monitor real-time data feeds, and dynamically adjust routing for optimal performance.

PERSONALISATION

The growth in e-commerce and rising consumer expectations demand transparency and personalisation from the



Tribhuwan Negi
Chief Technology Officer
Kale Logistics Solutions

logistics providers. AI agentification enables real-time customer interaction through chatbots and virtual assistants, offering instant shipment updates and tailored solutions via web, mobile, or voice platforms.

By analysing customer preferences, these agents customise delivery options and services, shifting logistics from reactive support to proactive engagement, boosting cus-

“AI agents acting as digital diplomats bridge gaps between disparate IT systems and communication protocols.”

tomers loyalty and unlocking new business opportunities.

COLLABORATION

One of the challenges in the logistics sector is the coordination among stakeholders such as shippers, carriers, warehouses and regulators. AI agents excel at ecosystem integration, acting as digital diplomats that bridge gaps between disparate IT systems and communication protocols. By exchanging data, negotiating contracts, and verifying compliance, these agents foster a resilient supply chain network.

DRIVING PREDICTIVE LOGISTICS

The full potential of AI agentification is unlocked through predictive analytics and adaptive decision-making. By ingesting historical and real-time data ranging from shipment patterns and fuel prices to macroeconomic indicators AI agents can forecast demand, forecast disruptions, and optimise capacity planning. In practice, this translates to dynamic routing, where delivery plans are updated on-the-fly based on live traffic, weather, or infrastructure conditions.

CONCLUSION

AI agentification is not a futuristic vision, it is becoming the standard in logistics, creating smart supply chains. As the industry continues to navigate globalisation and uncertainty, those who embrace this wave of digital intelligence will lead the path redefining what is possible in delivery of the goods and services worldwide.





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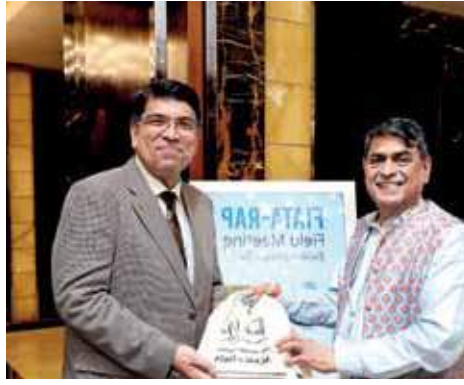
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Technology & collaborations: Key to air cargo future

Glyn Hughes, Director-General, TIACA, sheds light on the growing role as a logistics hub and discussed how innovation, digitalisation and collaboration drive the industry forward. To maintain the positive trajectory of global prosperity, we need cooler heads to prevail, he adds.



CT Bureau

What Share your thoughts on US tariffs and the trade barriers?

Since the early 1990s, international trade has lifted over a billion people out of poverty into the middle class. That progress was built on the foundation of open and interconnected trade systems where manufacturers could set up facilities around the world and move goods to consumers efficiently. Whenever we introduce protectionist policies, be it tariffs or non-tariff barriers, we risk disrupting that system. Trade wars do not produce winners.

They lead to inflation, increased costs and, ultimately, make the consumers hesitant to spend. This affects manufacturing, logistics, and employment across the board. To maintain the positive trajectory of global prosperity, we need cooler heads to prevail. We should aim for coop-



Glyn Hughes
Director General
TIACA

eration and a return to open trade rather than tit-for-tat tariff escalation.

How do you see AI and digitalisation shaping air cargo in the next 10 years?

Air cargo moves goods worth US\$ 9 trillion every year. These include life-saving pharma, electronics and products that enrich our daily lives. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitalisation will drive efficiencies across the supply

chain network. Companies are implementing technology to improve visibility, security, and speed. Implementing AI will improve operations and position the industry to better serve a changing world.

What are some of initiatives and upcoming events organised by TIACA?

TIACA represents the supply chain—from airlines, freight forwarders, and ground handlers to technology and equipment providers, e-commerce platforms, and shippers. Our mission is to advocate for air cargo and help drive harmonisation in trade. We use our events as platforms to raise awareness and promote collaboration.

This year, we have two major events. First, our Executive Summit will be held in Hong Kong from 24 to 26 June. It is a high-level thought leadership event where industry leaders gather to shape the future. Then, from 3 to 6 November, we will organise our Air Cargo Forum in Abu Dhabi. It is a large-scale event with up to 2,000 attendees, featuring a major trade show, extensive

conference sessions, and many networking opportunities. These events are significant for connecting the international air cargo community.

“Air cargo moves goods worth US\$ 9 trillion p.a. These include electronics, e-commerce, pharma among others.”

What are the air cargo trends you are observing this year in the Middle East?

The global economy is continuously evolving. While Asia remains the hub of production, Western Europe and North America are still the main centres of consumption. The Middle East holds a strategic geographical advantage. Given current challenges in maritime transport such as the ongoing Red Sea conflict, which are adding up to two weeks to shipping times, air cargo has become a important alternative.



ME trends

- Strategic location boosts global connectivity
- Freight investments reinforce logistics role
- Red Sea delays heighten air cargo demand
- Hub between Asia, Europe, and America

Collaborations

- Tariff barriers risk global trade flow
- TIACA events foster industry innovation
- AI drives smarter cargo operations
- Digital tools enhance supply chain speed

Hike in engineering goods in April 2025

Trade: Export

| Sl. No. | Commodities | (Values in Million USD) | | % Change |
|---------|---|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | | APR'24 | APR'25 | APR'25 |
| 1 | Tea | 60.05 | 69.61 | 15.93 |
| 2 | Coffee | 137.27 | 202.95 | 47.85 |
| 3 | Rice | 952.06 | 1081.79 | 13.63 |
| 4 | Other cereals | 22.20 | 17.86 | -19.57 |
| 5 | Tobacco | 118.71 | 197.57 | 66.43 |
| 6 | Spices | 405.97 | 439.98 | 8.38 |
| 7 | Cashew | 22.32 | 18.35 | -17.80 |
| 8 | Oil meals | 133.23 | 124.27 | -6.72 |
| 9 | Oil seeds | 112.72 | 106.58 | -5.45 |
| 10 | Fruits & vegetables | 293.15 | 383.20 | 30.72 |
| 11 | Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items | 245.59 | 264.52 | 7.71 |
| 12 | Marine products | 494.19 | 582.19 | 17.81 |
| 13 | Meat, dairy & poultry products | 321.44 | 372.40 | 15.85 |
| 14 | Iron ore | 145.88 | 127.29 | -12.74 |
| 15 | Mica, coal & other ores, minerals, including processed minerals | 341.12 | 458.59 | 34.43 |
| 16 | Leather & leather products | 303.31 | 315.17 | 3.91 |
| 17 | Ceramic products & glassware | 339.94 | 340.71 | 0.23 |
| 18 | Gems & jewellery | 2257.89 | 2500.29 | 10.74 |
| 19 | Drugs & pharmaceuticals | 2428.39 | 2486.00 | 2.37 |
| 20 | Organic & inorganic chemicals | 2492.11 | 2265.49 | -9.09 |
| 21 | Engineering goods | 8547.61 | 9511.46 | 11.28 |
| 22 | Electronic goods | 2646.21 | 3691.81 | 39.51 |
| 23 | Cotton yarn/fabs./made-ups, handloom products etc. | 946.77 | 962.97 | 1.71 |
| 24 | Man-made yarn/fabs./made-ups e tc. | 368.40 | 383.80 | 4.18 |
| 25 | RMG of all textiles | 1198.40 | 1371.34 | 14.43 |
| 26 | Jute mfg, including floor covering | 27.11 | 28.35 | 4.58 |
| 27 | Carpet | 111.18 | 114.87 | 3.32 |
| 28 | Handicrafts, excl. handmade carpet | 125.09 | 122.60 | -1.99 |
| 29 | Petroleum products | 7045.12 | 7374.50 | 4.68 |
| 30 | Plastic & linoleum | 665.95 | 696.44 | 4.58 |
| | Sub-Total | 33309.37 | 36612.96 | 9.92 |
| | GRAND TOTAL | 35303.60 | 38487.74 | 9.02 |

Note 1: Exports include Re-Exports.

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

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

Petroleum imports grew in April 2025

Trade: Import

| Sl. No. | Commodities | (Values in Million USD) | | % Change |
|---------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | APR'24 | APR'25 | APR'25 |
| 1 | Cotton raw & waste | 37.91 | 86.88 | 129.17 |
| 2 | Vegetable oil | 1337.43 | 1229.20 | -8.09 |
| 3 | Pulses | 411.08 | 314.46 | -23.50 |
| 4 | Fruits & vegetables | 254.78 | 231.93 | -8.97 |
| 5 | Pulp and waste paper | 143.34 | 149.73 | 4.46 |
| 6 | Textile yarn fabric, made-up articles | 162.01 | 193.12 | 19.20 |
| 7 | Fertilisers, crude & manufactured | 594.24 | 653.64 | 10.00 |
| 8 | Sulphur & unroasted iron pyrites | 6.30 | 40.04 | 535.16 |
| 9 | Metaliferrous ores & other minerals | 591.28 | 1050.36 | 77.64 |
| 10 | Coal, coke & briquettes, etc. | 3089.37 | 2710.07 | -12.28 |
| 11 | Petroleum, crude & products | 16493.40 | 20715.57 | 25.60 |
| 12 | Wood & wood products | 461.90 | 543.02 | 17.56 |
| 13 | Leather & leather products | 62.09 | 59.09 | -4.84 |
| 14 | Organic & inorganic chemicals | 2206.44 | 2445.83 | 10.85 |
| 15 | Dyeing/tanning/colouring materials | 325.69 | 352.74 | 8.31 |
| 16 | Artificial resins, plastic materials, etc. | 1704.35 | 1945.44 | 14.15 |
| 17 | Chemical material & products | 911.78 | 1967.23 | 115.76 |
| 18 | Newsprint | 27.15 | 23.24 | -14.40 |
| 19 | Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones | 1663.08 | 1670.77 | 0.46 |
| 20 | Iron & steel | 1566.56 | 1761.82 | 12.46 |
| 21 | Non-ferrous metals | 1782.75 | 2318.03 | 30.03 |
| 22 | Machine tools | 400.21 | 532.65 | 33.09 |
| 23 | Machinery, electrical & non-electrical | 3791.30 | 4670.89 | 23.20 |
| 24 | Transport equipment | 2682.26 | 2596.91 | -3.18 |
| 25 | Project goods | 37.73 | 93.30 | 147.28 |
| 26 | Professional instrument, optical goods, among others | 625.95 | 730.33 | 16.68 |
| 27 | Electronic goods | 7051.45 | 9250.79 | 31.19 |
| 28 | Medicinal & pharmaceutical products | 683.88 | 749.04 | 9.53 |
| 29 | Gold | 2953.51 | 3097.09 | 4.86 |
| 30 | Silver | 118.01 | 159.85 | 35.45 |
| | Sub-Total | 52177.25 | 62343.04 | 19.48 |
| | GRAND TOTAL | 54488.05 | 64912.16 | 19.13 |

Note 1: Imports include Re-Imports. Note 2: The figures for APR 2025 are provisional.
Note 3: Grand total is inclusive of component 'Other'.

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

Data-driven supply chains reshaping role of forwarders

Rise of e-commerce and rising demand for speed accelerated need for decentralised warehousing, AI-powered inventory management and advanced last-mile delivery. In coming decades, logistics will become more predictive and technology-enabled, says **Stéphane Graber, Director-General, FIATA**.



Ritika Arora Bhola

What are the global trends shaping the logistics industry, and how is FIATA adapting to them?

The logistics industry is undergoing rapid transformation driven by digitalisation, sustainability imperatives, and growing geopolitical uncertainty. The shift toward integrated multimodal solutions coupled with increasing regulatory complexity and data-driven supply chains is reshaping the role of forwarders. FIATA is responding by modernising industry standards such as through the development of electronic FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading and by strengthening dialogue with international organisations to ensure policy developments reflect operational realities. We are also investing in capacity-building to help our members remain agile in a fast-changing environment.

How do you see logistics evolving in the next five to 10 years?

Logistics is set to evolve from a traditional support function into a driver of competitiveness, with a shift towards sustainability and digitalisation, reinforced by resilience through corridor development and innovation. The rise of e-commerce and demand for speed are accelerating the need for decentralised warehousing, AI-powered inventory management, and advanced last-mile solutions. Freight forwarders will be central to



Stéphane Graber
Director General
FIATA

“Logistics is set to evolve from a traditional setup to a driver of competitiveness, with a shift towards sustainability.”

managing this complex multimodal network. Over the coming decade, logistics will become predictive, technology-enabled, and environmentally conscious, yet will continue to rely on human expertise. FIATA is committed to equipping its members to face the challenges ahead and lead this transformation.

How is FIATA supporting its members in transitioning toward sustainable and green logistics practices?

FIATA promotes sustainability through advocacy and practical tools. We are engaged in multilateral discussions to ensure forwarders are recognised in climate dialogues; we are advancing work on CO₂ emissions tracking, green cor-



ridor development, digitalisation of logistics processes, and optimisation of multimodal transport. In parallel, we provide our members with training and guidance on implementing greener best practices, from carbon footprint measurement to modal shift strategies. Our goal is to empower our members to contribute to global climate goals without compromising their operational viability.

How has FIATA responded to recent global disruptions?

These disruptions have reaffirmed the importance of resilient logistics networks. The international association has acted as a central platform for information exchange, rapidly mobilising expertise to help members navigate the challenges that have risen from global disruptions. We have worked closely with United Nations' agencies and other partners to facilitate freight movement during crises and advocate for logistics as an essential service. We are also integrating lessons learned into our long-term policy and training programmes.

What are your top priorities as the FIATA's DG?

I want to strengthen FIATA's influence as the global voice of forwarding by uniting logistics stakeholders, expanding the adoption of digital tools that support efficient and secure transport operations, and ensuring our members are well-prepared to face regulatory, technological, and environmental shifts. This includes driving forward the implementation of the digital Negotiable FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading, supporting negotiations for multimodal transport, enhancing member engagement through accessible services and clearer communication.

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ FIATA promotes sustainability through advocacy and practical tools.
- ➔ Freight forwarders will be central to managing this complex and multimodal network.

'PPPs play vital role in infra projects with industry needs'

Emerging economies in Southeast Asia are investing in air cargo infrastructure. In the coming years, cross-border e-commerce, rising demand for high-value and time-sensitive goods and integration of digital platforms will be key drivers, says **Yukki Nugrahawan Hanafi**, FIATA Region Asia-Pacific Chair.



CT Bureau

What are cargo growth opportunities in Asia-Pacific in the next two to three years?

The APAC region continues to serve as a manufacturing and e-commerce powerhouse this offers growth opportunities. In the next two to three years, increased cross-border e-commerce, rising demand for high-value and time-sensitive goods and integration of digital platforms will be key drivers. Emerging economies in Southeast Asia are investing in cargo infra, opening new trade lanes and regional gateways.

Are airports and logistics hubs in APAC keeping pace with demand for capacity and handling?

Hubs, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Incheon, are advancing rapidly with digitalisation, automation, robot-

ics and expansion of handling facilities. Many secondary airports face challenges in scaling capacity, modernising systems and ensuring 24x7 ops.

What bottlenecks that need to be resolved, and how can PPPs help address them?

The pressing flaws include limited cold chain facilities, inadequate handling infrastructure at secondary airports and inconsistent air cargo security processes. PPPs can play a vital role in accelerating investments, ensuring operational expertise and aligning infra projects with industry needs. They can support development of specialised cargo zones, innovation hubs and multimodal connectivity.

Can APAC improve cross-border efficiency through customs and security protocols?

Harmonisation of customs and adoption of global standards



Yukki Nugrahawan Hanafi
Chair
FIATA Region Asia-Pacific

are must to enhance cross-border cargo efficiency. While digital processes are in place, the region is still in transition; many areas continue to rely on documentation. Full digitalisation and reliability of customs are thus critical. The authorities must be able to communicate with one another to avoid need for manual submissions that can result in forwarders coughing up penalties. Implementation of digital customs platforms, pre-clearance systems and mutual recognition

“My priority is to fortify regional collaboration and position forwarders as partners in cargo development.”

of AEO programmes can reduce delays. FIATA is promoting the modernisation of the global air cargo programme, which governs the relationship between forwarders and airlines and is advocating harmonisation of cargo procedures across APAC.

What are your priorities as FIATA Member for APAC and how would you help in this regard?


My priority is to fortify regional collaboration and position forwarders as partners in cargo development. I aim to ensure their voices are heard as we work toward APAC's resilient ecosystem. This includes capacity building through FIATA training projects, enhancing digital readiness among members, and creating opportunity through PPP dialogue.



AT A GLANCE

- ➔ APAC continues to serve as manufacturing and e-commerce powerhouse
- ➔ PPPs can play a vital role in accelerating investments and aligning infra projects

E-commerce, resilience drive changes in freight forwarding

Sharing the impact of shift towards e-commerce in international air cargo industry, **Kannan Nachiappan, Chief Executive Officer, GSA Global Cargo LLC**, delves into the significant changes shaping the future of global air cargo and logistics sectors. He was speaking to  in an interview.



CT Bureau

Could you tell us about the new freight trends in the region?

When I started 33 years ago, the region saw a high volume of air-sea cargo, with Dubai serving as a major transit hub. The transit charges and related factors make it cost-effective for businesses. However, today, air-sea cargo volumes are declining, while e-commerce is growing rapidly. There is now a strong focus on e-commerce cargo among freight forwarders and general sales agents (GSAs). That, in my view, is one of the most significant shifts in the air cargo industry.

Do you think integrated single window systems for cargo help agents?

It is a positive move. Simplifying procedures benefits the cargo industry. In the past, the documentation process was much simpler. Today, it is more complex, with increased paperwork and longer processing times. This has



Kannan Nachiappan
Chief Executive Officer
GSA Global Cargo LLC

made cargo operations more challenging. If documentation and administrative costs can be optimised, it could help us regain the air cargo volumes that have shifted elsewhere.

When it comes to transshipment, do you think the high costs are a challenge?

It is not necessary that local transshipment costs are high, but other transit ports offer more competitive charges. This price gap can result in a loss of cargo volumes for us. Increasing sea freight capacity from the Far East, along with faster ships, has made air-sea combinations less attractive.

Direct air freight routes to Europe and the USA from Asia are also becoming more competitive, in terms of pricing as well as efficiency.


“Today, the procedures have become complex, with increased paperwork and longer processing times.”

What is your opinion on AI and disruptive technologies entering the business?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a part of the industry. I have seen the evolution—from the pre-fax era to email, and now to AI. Initially, there is resistance to any new advanced technology, but eventually, it becomes part of how we work. Advanced technologies might face initial hesitation, but they will bring valuable innovations. Over time, I believe, these technologies will enhance efficiency across logistics processes.

What is your opinion on the air cargo industry in the region?

I believe this year will see growth. E-commerce volumes are on the rise, and I am considering setting up a dedicated office for the sector.

The business model in logistics is undergoing a transformation. Forwarders are adapting to optimising sea movements and rethinking sea-air strategies due to faster ships. Overall, air cargo volumes are poised to grow, and I believe the cargo industry will continue to thrive. 

Impacts

- E-commerce cargo gaining strong momentum
- Traditional sea-air volume steadily declining
- Logistics models adapting to new demand
- Growth expected in e-commerce sector

Changes

- AI set to streamline cargo operations
- High transit costs reduce competitiveness
- Simplified documentation aids efficiency
- Geopolitical shifts reshape freight routes



Brazil-India relations soar amid US tariff ripples

Brazil's National Logistics Plan has envisioned modernising its railway network by 2035. The country has planned to increase its network by 91% to boost its export trade and being competitive in global trade, says **Ajay Kumar Pandey, AGM & Head, Breezonica Logistics and Warehousing LLP.**



CT Bureau

With the addition of Nigeria this January as a partner country, BRICS currently comprises 54.6 per cent of the world's population and 42.2 per cent of the global GDP.

As you would have witnessed, India is utilising the discounted Russian crude oil by increasing imports at a time when Western nations-imposed sanctions on Russia due to its conflict with Ukraine. Defending its move, India said it is leveraging discounts but not supporting the

In July 2024, India recorded a trade surplus of US\$ 197 million with Brazil, exporting US\$ 575 million in goods, while importing US\$ 378 million. India has become Brazil's fifth-largest trading partner in 2021.

The 15th BRICS Agricultural Summit, hosted by Brazil on 17 April, laid the groundwork for deeper collaboration between India and Brazil in agri trade, technology, and innovation. Shivaraj Singh Chouhan, Union Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Minister attended the event and pitched for increas-



Ajay Kumar Pandey
AGM & Head, Breezonica Logistics and Warehousing LLP

cessing. The goal is to replicate successful models in India. "Brazil's rise as a major agri-

“Groundwork for collaboration between India and Brazil was laid during 15th BRICS meeting.”

are under discussion, such as interest in missile systems, aircraft and ships. Defense deals will unlock major diversification of trade among BRICS nations, especially Brazil.

Brazil's National Logistics Plan has envisioned modernising its railways network by 2035. The country has planned to increase its network by 91 per cent to boost its export trade and being competitive in global trade.

New Delhi-based Breezonica Logistics and Warehousing has played itself to materialise this opportunity and secured a part-vessel charter to transport a project cargo shipment from India to Brazil. Ballast tamping machine used for railway track ballast was loaded at the Mumbai Port, which will dock at Vitoria Port in ETA before mid-June.



war. This has led it to massive crude oil imports from Russia, likely to surpass two million barrels per day in the current month—the highest since May 2023. India has been actively increasing trade among BRICS nations, while BRICS even spoke of having its own currency, which infuriated US President Donald Trump. India has started gradually increasing its exports to Brazil.

ing soya production and exports in India.

India, which currently imports soyabean oil, is now looking to collaborate with Brazil to set up soybean production and processing infrastructure domestically. Chouhan visited several Brazilian farms and facilities to study the best practices in irrigation, mechanisation and food pro-

exporting nation in the past 50 years is inspiring. Our collaboration will help Indian farmers access world-class technology and increase production,” the minister said.

Brazil is likely to sign a pact for ‘Scorpene’ Submarine MRO with India next month. This move will open new vistas for boosting defense exports from India. More defense deals

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ India has been actively increasing trade among the BRICS countries
- ➔ Collaboration with Brazil will help Indian farmers access world-class tech and increase production

Stressing crucial role of sustainability in logistics

Emergence of multimodal coordination allows forwarders to design optimised, carbon-efficient routes. This shift in focus comes as governments implement stricter environmental regulations and companies face more pressure from environmentally aware consumers and investors, says Cyrus Katgara, Partner, Jeena & Co.

The impact of supply chains on carbon emissions, accounting for 60 per cent of the total and an average of 80 per cent of a firm's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, highlights the critical role and opportunity for freight forwarders in combating climate change.

Often unseen yet vital to trade, freight forwarders are now recognised for their influence in achieving carbon reduction targets. This shift in focus comes as the governments implement stricter environmental regulations and companies face

“Forwarders are known for their influence in achieving CO₂ reduction targets.”

more pressure from environmentally aware consumers and investors, placing the forwarding sector at a pivotal juncture. This transition extends beyond mere compliance or the publication of sustainability reports. It involves a fundamental reshaping of transportation—how goods are moved

and our responsibility towards environmental preservation. For freight forwarders, this means utilising their position within multimodal supply chains to drive meaningful change.

Freight transportation relied on road transport, constituting 71 per cent of the total, leading to logistics costs of around 13 to 14 per cent of GDP. The integration of more cost-effective rail and waterways has begun to reduce this dependence. This shift offers environmental benefits, with potential emission reductions of 15 to 20 per cent.



Cyrus Katgara
Partner
Jeena & Company

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

Empowering India with AI

As demand for AI infrastructure grows, India offers cost advantages, a renewable energy focus and a strategic location for development of data centres. However, its emergence as a global AI data centre hub depends on bridging gaps in AI infrastructure, talent availability and policy framework, as per Deloitte India's report.



CT Bureau

The country could require an additional 45 to 50 million square feet of real estate space and 40 to 45 terawatt hours incremental power by 2030 to meet the growing demand for AI, according to Deloitte India's latest report titled 'Attracting AI Data Centre Infrastructure Investment in India'.

The report suggested targeted policy interventions would be critical in positioning India as a global AI hub.

The report identifies six key pillars for India to reach its potential in building a world-leading, AI-ready ecosystem.

These pillars are real estate, power utilities, infrastructure, connectivity, network infrastructure, talent and pol-



India offers an advantage in data centre real estate with lower land and labour costs

icy framework. From a policy perspective, the report suggested introducing a separate category for data centres in National Building Code, 2016 and recognising them under Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1981.

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Shri Yogendra Garg, Member (IT, Taxpayer Services & Technology), CBIC launches the white paper titled "THE FUTURE OF EXPRESS CARGO CLEARANCE IN INDIA - ECCS in the New Customs Integrated System"

'Express cargo to fuel MSMEs growth in Viksit Bharat 2047'

The upcoming CIS is poised to elevate India's stand in global logistics and trade facilitation. The white paper marks vital step in our engagement with policymakers. It outlines the industry's clearance requirements and calls for a seamless integration of ECCS into the CIS, says **Vijay Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, EICI**.



CT Bureau

The Express Industry Council of India (EICI) and The Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF), jointly launched a white paper, which is titled 'The Future of Express Cargo Clearance in India-ECCS in the New Customs Integrated System', underlining the requirement to ensure the smooth integration of processes and preserve the strengths of the existing Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS) as it is proposed to be integrated into the forthcoming the Customs Integrated System (CIS).

The white paper aims to apprise the regulatory authorities, especially the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), about the critical features of the currently operational ECCS and the express industry's expectations from the new CIS. It was submitted to the CBIC at a consultation held in New Delhi, which was also attended by Yogendra Garg, Member, IT & Taxpayer Services, CBIC, officials from DG Systems, and senior representatives from the express and logistics industry.

Based on the on-ground realities of the express indus-

Industry is estimated to be valued at ₹700 billion last year and has witnessed a 15% to 18% growth in the past seven years

try, the paper recommends measures to streamline operations, reduce redundancies, and strengthen the country's trade facilitation architecture. The express cargo industry is recognised as a significant part of the logistics ecosystem, powering e-commerce

and supporting India's EoDB and global trade integration goals. It is critical to MSMEs, which are providing solutions for integration into global value chains.

The industry is roughly estimated to be valued at ₹700 billion last year and has witnessed a 15 per cent to 18 per cent CAGR growth over the past seven years. The industry employs 30 lakh people. India's Courier, Express, and Parcel market is projected to grow from US\$ 8.62 billion in this year to approximately US\$ 15 billion by 2030, highlighting the need for efficient logistics systems.



The white paper outlines key recommendations for system-related reforms necessary to enhance ECCS as part of its integration into CIS. Given the time-sensitive nature of express shipments, it is critical that the new system retains the distinctive features and operational agility of ECCS.

“Express cargo industry is a vital part to the logistics ecosystem, powering e-commerce and supporting India’s EoDB and global trade integration goals. With the upcoming CIS poised to elevate India’s standing in global logistics and trade facilitation, this white paper marks an important step in our continued engagement with

policymakers. It also outlines the express industry’s unique clearance requirements and calls for a seamless integration of ECCS into the CIS. We collaborated with the CBIC in developing the ECCS, and this white paper sets the course for the next important phase of partnership—aligning with the government’s forward-looking approach to policymaking, involving stakeholders. As India charts its course toward becoming a US\$ 30 trillion economy under Viksit Bharat 2047, the express cargo industry will play a pivotal role in driving trade and fuelling MSME growth,” Vijay Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, EICI, said



Key recommendations include:

- ❖ The express clearance module should be a separate, independently designed module within the CIS, following the Immediate Release Guidelines of the WCO.

- ❖ CIS should adopt a modular architecture to separate express from other cargo modes (maritime, air, land, postal) to ensure that system failures in one domain and not to disrupt others.

- ❖ Engagement with the express industry is essential across all stages of CIS development and implementation.

- ❖ Core ECCS functionalities such as real-time status updates, bulk filing, and bulk and auto Out of Charge / Let Export Order must be preserved and incorporated into CIS.

- ❖ All functionalities currently offered through ICEGATE should be integrated into the express module to eliminate operational inefficiencies and reduce dwell times.

- ❖ The express module must be API-enabled to allow seamless interconnectivity, scalability and adaptability.

- ❖ Refined risk management system should be embedded, balancing stringent controls with facilitative measures tailored for express cargo.

- ❖ Examination processes must be system-driven to minimise manual interventions, which causes delays for time-sensitive shipments.

- ❖ Dedicated help desk should be set up for express industry users to ensure swift resolution of system issues

- ❖ Scheduled system downtimes must be limited and occur at times that minimise disruption.

- ❖ Information available across government platforms such as GST and banking systems should be auto linked to the CIS to avoid redundant data entry.

These recommendations are described as foundational requirements to ensure the continued agility, scalability, and global competitiveness of the country’s express cargo operations.

“The white paper demonstrates a shared vision between the express cargo industry and regulatory authorities to align operational priorities with the government’s vision of promoting economic growth and streamlining trade. We acknowledge the government’s commitment to stakeholder consultations and upholding the spirit of collaboration. With the recommendations of this paper, we are hopeful that customs develop a system that meets the specific needs of the express logistics industry and contributes to the broader development of India’s logistics ecosystem,” Afaq Hussain, Director, BRIEF, commented.



India-UK sign FTA to foster growth, agree to cut tariffs

India and the United Kingdom have signed multi-billion-pound free trade agreement (FTA) ensuring 90% tariff reduction. India has agreed to reduce tariffs on a range of UK products, while British shoppers could see cheaper prices and more choice on products, including clothes, footwear and food products.



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India and Britain struck a free trade agreement (FTA), which is “the biggest and economically significant bilateral trade deal the UK has done since leaving the EU”. As a result of the agreement, bilateral trade is expected to swell

As a result of the agreement, total trade in gems and jewellery is expected to double, reaching US\$7 billion, stated GJEPC

by £25.5 billion (US\$ 34.1 billion) per year in the long run, the UK Department for Business and Trade stated in an official press release. That would be a 60 per cent increase from the 2024 level, as per UK government data.

India has agreed to reduce tariffs on a range of UK goods, including whisky, medical devices, advanced machinery and lamb. And most of these levies will be removed within a decade, as per a release. In return, the United Kingdom will lower tariffs on Indian goods, the business and trade department suggested, without providing details.

“British shoppers could see cheaper prices and more choice on products, including clothes, footwear and food products and frozen prawns, as (the) UK liberalises tariffs,” the release stated. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) described the FTA as a



HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA-UK FTA

- 99% Indian exports to benefit from zero duty in UK market.
- Indian import duty will be slashed, locking in reductions on 90% of tariff lines, 85% of these becoming fully tariff-free within a decade.
- India to reduce tariff for whisky, medical devices, advanced machinery, and lamb, making U.K. exports more competitive.
- Goods with reduced import duties for Indian consumers: Cosmetics, aerospace, lamb, medical devices, salmon, electrical machinery, soft drinks, chocolate and biscuits.
- Products at cheaper prices for British shoppers: Clothes, footwear, and food products and frozen prawns.
- Automotive tariffs will go from over 100% to 10% under a quota.
- Three-year exemption from social security payments for Indian employees working in the UK.
- Export opportunities for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods and toys, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, auto parts and engines and organic chemicals.

‘transformative accord’. “Guided by the 2030 Roadmap, the agreement will help advance a comprehensive strategic partnership between India and the UK steering bilateral trade towards the ambitious target of US\$ 100 billion by 2030,” said Sanjiv Puri, President, CII.

The Ficci welcomed the opening up of “massive export opportunities for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys and gems and jewellery”.

“This landmark trade agreement is poised to significantly accelerate our export growth, with projections indicating a rise to US\$ 2.5 billion within the next two years. As a result, total bilateral trade in gems and jewellery is expected to double, reaching US\$7 billion,” said Kirit Bhansali, Chairman, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC).

Air India begins airport-to-door delivery of pharmaceuticals

With GDP certification, Air India has now become India's only carrier with trained staff to manage active pharma door delivery. This service is a step forward in pivoting cargo offering from 'airport-to-airport' to 'airport-to-door' services, says **Ramesh Mamidala, Head, Cargo, Air India.**



CT Bureau

Air India has successfully completed its first-ever international airport-to-door cargo delivery of a tightly monitored, temperature-sensitive shipment of life-saving pharma from Delhi to Brussels. The landmark shipment marks an expansion in the national carrier's cargo capabilities. The cargo—six tonnes of essential drugs manufactured by Sun Pharma—was packed into four lower-deck pallets and required consistent temperature control between 15°C and 25°C to remain effective.

What made the delivery exceptional was not just the nature of the cargo, but the innovative route and end-to-end cold-chain handling adopted by Air India in collaboration with local partners,



the national airline stated in a statement. Airport-to-door cargo delivery refers to a service where goods are transported from an airport cargo facility to a recipient's doorstep or a designated location. It combines air freight with ground transportation. It involves picking up cargo from an airport, transporting it

via truck or other land-based methods, and delivering it to the destination.

The journey began at Delhi airport's bustling cargo terminal. Once loaded, the shipment was flown to Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport on an Air India aircraft. Upon landing, the

arrived at the consignee's warehouse," Air India stated in the statement.

GDP-CERTIFIED

Transporting pharmaceuticals requires specialised logistics and high levels of precision. Air India recently received the GDP) certification for its cargo business, a testament to the airline's compliance with international guidelines for safe and secure distribution of pharmaceuticals.

"With the GDP certification, we have become India's only carrier to manage active pharmaceuticals," said Ramesh Mamidala, Head, Cargo, Air India. "These first shipments of our new airport-to-door service is a step forward in progressively pivoting our cargo offering from 'airport-to-airport' to world-class 'airport-to-door' services, delivered to the highest standards. It is not about getting it there, it is about getting it there right," he added. In 2024-25, Air India moved 4,000 tonnes of pharma globally. "Going forward, the deliveries will be a key part of its cargo growth, creating opportunities," Air India stated. 🇮🇳

Airport-to-door cargo delivery refers to a service where goods are shifted from cargo facility to recipient's doorstep

pharmaceuticals were swiftly transferred to a specialised Road Feeder Service (RFS) truck equipped with refrigeration units, ensuring that the medicines maintained their required temperature through the final leg of the journey to a warehouse in Brussels, the airline stated.

"Exactly 36 hours after leaving Delhi, the drugs



LCB celebrates success of LCB Premier League 2025 Season II

Logistics Club of Bengaluru (LCB) celebrated success of LCB Premier League 2025-Season II. The tourney brought together 18 formidable teams from across logistics spectrum, each competing with passion, precision and pride. Bengaluru Airport team won the tournament and lifted the cup.



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US tariffs, global uncertainties increase dwell time at ICDs

We are expanding capacity with a new yard in Talegaon in Gujarat. It would launch in November this year. Shortage of skilled and unskilled manpower is a big challenge. For skilled manpower we are working with many colleges for placements and summer trainings, says **Malcolm D'Souza, CEO, KSH Distriparks.**



CT Bureau

How is your business shaping up amid infra bottlenecks, connectivity issues, shortage of skilled manpower and land acquisition hurdles?

For 2024-2025 financial year we ended with 1 lakh TEUs and are expecting significant growth in this financial year. Currently, we are adding additional capacity with a new yard in Talegaon in Gujarat, which would be launched in November this year. We are increasing our existing fleet size

by an additional 20 per cent of our own and 40 per cent increase in the vendor's fleet. The congestion between Pune and Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) would reduce from December with the missing link in operation.

The New Ring Road is scheduled to be announced in Pune for better connectivity. Shortage of skilled and unskilled manpower is a big challenge. For skilled manpower, we are working with colleges for placements, summer trainees and on-the-job training. For the unskilled, we are working with OEMs and internal training for skill development.

We are hiking our existing fleet size by an additional 20% of our own and 40% increase in the vendor's fleet

Land sourcing has become a challenge as the land prices have skyrocketed with the emergence of new original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). We have navigated this and managed to add additional capacity with our new terminal.

What kind of infra and tech have you invested in to enhance efficiency in your operations?

- We have invested in Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking integrated with our Transportation Management System (TMS) platform for transport.
- Smart gate for gate in, gate out and automated survey
- Container tracking within the inland container depot (ICD) for accurate location and easy retrieval.
- Latest container handling equipment to track, measure and improving operations efficiency.

How do digital solutions and fleet tracking systems contribute to streamlining trailer movements?

Technological developments have driven innovation and KSH has implemented digital solutions to achieve faster container turnaround time (TAT), improve trip efficiency, reduce wastage such as detention and vehicle idling. Vehicle health monitoring has reduced vehicle down time.

What steps has your firm implemented to ensure security and safety across terminals and on-road operations?

GPS helps monitoring vehicle and container tracking, training for defensive driving for drivers and education on vehicle health to reduce accidents and zero fatalities. We also do vehicle health check-ups and periodic maintenance, Geo fencing through GPS for cargo and vehicle safety.

How would you gauge the current infra backing containerised cargo flow in India?

Infrastructure has seen huge developments in the past few years, average container TAT in ports has improved due to construction of new roads and flyovers.



Malcolm D'Souza
CEO
KSH Distriparks

The missing link on the Mumbai-Pune expressway will be a game changer for heavy vehicles. Rail infrastructure has also been developed between Mumbai and Pune. The proposed Ring Road would create better access between national highways and Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

What are pain points commonly faced by container logistics operators and ICDs today?

The challenges faced by ICDs is the balance of imports versus exports, with new tariffs and global uncertainties making supply chains unpredictable thus increasing dwell times. We have increased our yard space to cater to seasonal increase in volumes.

Our efficient tracking system and yard management

helps increase efficiency for ICDs. The other challenge we face is the driver shortage and this is prevalent in industry. Some of the ways in which we retain drivers are through better infrastructure facilities, rewards system, reducing vehicle

“Our handling equipment has been changed to electric in a bid to provide a sustainable means of cargo handling.”

dwell times, training to induct new drivers, among others.

With changing regulatory needs, what trends do you foresee shaping the container logistics' future in the next five to 10 years?

The vehicle norms are in favour of drivers such as introduction of AC cabins. Changes such as rest areas, toilets, restaurants and better road conditions made it possible for sustainable transport. Automation will help reduce wastages and help turn around inefficient ways of container handling.

Indian Customs has played a significant role in reducing supply chains bottlenecks. Automation and close monitoring will

reduce clearance time frames from both importers and exporters.

How is EXIM trade, e-commerce logistics, and last-mile demand influencing containerised cargo demand?

The demand for containerised cargo has been growing due to the growth in international trade. Containerised safety and security of cargo has become of paramount importance. Containerisation has standardised the way in which the cargo is moving internationally.

With sustainability gaining traction in logistics, how do you make transportation and terminal ops environmentally friendly?

With growing demand for ethical and sustainable transportation and handling operations, we have diversified into alternate means of sourcing our energy demands. We have installed solar roof panels in order to cater to our major electricity requirements. Our handling equipment has been changed to electric in a bid to provide a sustainable means of cargo handling. We are working on alternative fuel for our vehicles to cater to a more sustainable transport module. Triangulation where the use of import containers for exports are at the helm of our transport strategy and this way, we save close to one million litres of fuel.



DP World unveils sustainable warehouse at Taloj in Gujarat

1,10,000 sq. ft. Grade-A warehouse features 11,000 pallet positions and supports multiple temperature zones to ensure secure and efficient movement of perishable and temperature-sensitive cargo, says **Anoop Chauhan**, Vice President, Contract Logistics and Cold Chain, DP World Subcontinent.



CT Bureau

DP World has launched a cutting-edge, sustainable cold chain warehouse in Taloja, Navi Mumbai. The 1,10,000 square feet Grade-A warehouse features 11,000 pallet positions and supports multiple temperature zones to ensure the secure and efficient movement of perishables and temperature-sensitive air cargo.

Located 8 km from the Taloja-Dombivli Road and close to the Navi Mumbai Airport (39 km), JNPA Port (43 km), and key container freight stations (40 km), the facility is well placed to serve Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Western Maharashtra. Equipped with advanced temperature control technology and next-gen refrigeration systems, it uses

sustainable refrigerants to enable precision cooling, energy efficiency, and reduced GHG emissions. It can cater to a range of temperature-sensitive products, including dairy, frozen foods, seafood, meat, pharma, and perishable produce. The new facility reinforces DP World's commitment to transforming India's logistics landscape and supporting the evolving needs of the pharma, FMCG and quick-service restaurant sectors.

"With rising demand for high-quality food and healthcare logistics, our new cold chain facility at Taloja delivers a future-ready solution to businesses. It combines sustainability, connectivity, and technology to help businesses grow in India's evolving consumption landscape," said Anoop Chauhan,



Anoop Chauhan
Vice President, Contract Logistics and Cold Chain, DP World Subcontinent

Vice President, Contract Logistics and Cold Chain, DP World Subcontinent.

The facility, in Gujarat, has been designed to the highest standards of safety, hygiene and compliance, meeting all regulatory standards for food and healthcare goods. Safety

“The facility is well placed to serve Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Western Maharashtra.”

features include a dedicated pump room, high-performance fire protection systems, rockwool insulation, thermal-sealed architecture, and 24x7 surveillance.

The warehouse is equipped with temperature and humidity monitoring alarms and real-time environment tracking. They provide cargo protection ensuring sensitive remain secure and stable throughout their storage and handling. ↗



Small private airports all set to swell till FY2028

Small private airports may embark on expansion of up to 1.5 times of their current base by FY 2028. This is in response to escalating travel demand and moderate capacity on the ground. In contrast, large private airports are likely to see a reduction in capacity addition, says **Ankit Haku, Director, Crisil Ratings**.



CT Bureau

Capital expenditure (CaPex) at small private airports, nearly half of the overall upcoming private airport CaPex, will be up 50 to 60 per cent on average in fiscals 2026-2028 as compared with previous three fiscal years. This will be driven

11 private airports & two upcoming private airports, together account for over 95% of country's traffic

by capacity expansion due to substantial increase in terminal utilisation levels.

CaPex at large private airports—remaining half of the overall upcoming private airport CaPex—will see a decline during the same period as much of the capacity expansion has been completed or is nearing completion. Net-net, overall CaPex of



private airports will slightly slow be down by 10 to 15 per cent to ₹40,000 crore over the next three years.

A Crisil ratings analysis of 11 operating private airports and two soon-to-be-operational private airports, which together accounts for more than 95 per cent of the country's private airport passenger traffic, indicates as much.

“Small private airports are expected to embark on an expansion of up to 1.5 times of their current base by 2028

fiscal year. This is in response to escalating travel demand and moderate capacity on the ground. Strong demand leading to recovery of air traffic movement has yielded a remarkable compound annual growth rate of 45 per cent in passenger traffic at small private airports between fiscal years 2022 and 2025.

However, capacity growth at these airports has been relatively sluggish, with a modest CAGR of 20 per cent over this period, resulting in terminal utilisation levels increasing

from 60 per cent to 90 per cent and a need to build additional capacity,” Ankit Haku, Director, Crisil Ratings, said.

Large private airports are likely to see a slash in capacity following substantial expansion over past three years, which absorbed high traffic growth and kept terminal utilisation stable at 80 to 85 per cent. Greenfield airports are set to become operational this fiscal year, with minimal capital expenditure required going forward. Their strategic locations in or near tier I cities minimise offtake risk, enabling a ramp-up of passenger and volumes.

“While capital expenditure for small private airports will increase by over two times, project risk will be manageable as these are expansions of existing sole airports. The expertise of the sponsors in operating large private airports and their fund-raising capabilities mitigates some of the risks,” Gauri Gupta, Team Leader, Crisil Ratings, said.



Intermodal connectivity plays vital role in air cargo ecosystem

Noida International Airport will have linkage between ICT and IWLZ, which will provide forwarders with faster cargo processing times. To further enhance cargo efficiency, the airport will utilise WMS, IATA's freight systems in order to boost operations, says **Nitin Mittal, Head, Cargo, NIA**.



Ritika Arora Bhola

What are the latest milestones NIA has achieved? When will cargo ops commence?

NIA has partnered with Air India SATS for development and operation of a multimodal cargo hub (MMCH). Construction of MMCH, which began in 2023, is progressing steadily. The Integrated Cargo Terminal (ICT) at AISATS was the key infrastructure milestone in phase I of MMCH development, which will play a pivotal role in North India's air cargo ecosystem. We remain committed to delivering a world-class airport catering to expectations of the passengers, airline partners and stakeholders.

Can you brief about the collaborations the NIA will have with cargo carriers and forwarders?

We are engaging with leading cargo airlines, forwarders, e-commerce logistics players, and multinational supply chain partners to set up collaborations. The ICT will support a variety of freight types, including general cargo, perishables, pharmaceuticals and express shipments, streamlined handling and customs clearances. A key differentiator and a first in India is the direct connectivity between the ICT and Integrated Warehousing and Logistics Zone (IWLZ), facilitated by the AISATS MMCH, which will provide freight forwarders with faster cargo processing times.

What infrastructure upgrades have been made to support cargo flow at the airport?

The MMCH will provide efficient intermodal connectivity, streamlining cargo movement within India and abroad. It will offer a comprehensive range of cargo handling services, including domestic and international shipments, express cargo handling and transshipment services. The MMCH will comprise an ICT and an IWLZ.

Some of the technology advancements planned for implementation at the NIA's cargo terminal include:

❖ **ICT:** Being developed on a 30-acre site with an initial capacity of 250,000 MT annually and designed to be scalable to meet future demands.



Nitin Mittal
Head, Cargo
Noida International Airport

❖ **IWLZ:** Featuring consolidation centre, bonded warehouse, logistics park and a dedicated trucking centre for efficient multimodal cargo movement.

❖ **COSYS+ Cloud-based platform:** AISATS' cloud-based warehouse management system will help in real-time

visibility of inventory and vital data throughout the journey.

❖ **Single Window Airport Cargo Community System:** It will facilitate seamless transfer of data across stakeholders in the supply chain.

❖ **Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs):** These vehicles will be introduced in the future to transport cargo.

The MMCH at NIA will utilise a digital solution, including the IATA-recommended e-freight system to streamline information flow and provide end-to-end and live tracking of shipments. This global standard promotes paperless clearance and supports efficient air cargo transportation. The IWLZ will provide e-commerce businesses and forwarders with enhanced



operational flexibility, contributing to the air cargo sector's growth in India.

What facilities does NIA have to carry perishables, pharma and high-value goods?

NIA's AISATS MMCH is designed to accommodate diverse cargo needs through dedicated facilities. This includes an ICT, offering a fully integrated space for handling imports, exports, and domestic shipments. The terminal will be equipped with temperature-controlled infrastructure for perishables, pharma, and high-value goods, adhering to global quality standards.

To ensure the integrity of pharma logistics, an IoT-based solution will be implemented, enabling real-time temperature and location tracking, along with other shipment data throughout the shifting process. The Express Courier Terminal will cater to e-commerce



merchandise and courier shipments, ensuring rapid clearance and delivery. The Consolidation Centre will provide warehousing and value-added services such as packaging, labelling, and sorting and optimised cargo consolidation.

The Trucking Centre offers ample parking for trucks, reducing congestion at the terminal's entry and exit points. These zones create a comprehensive solution for varied cargo handling needs, enhancing efficiency and reliability.

How does NIA plan to integrate digital solutions to improve cargo tracking, handling and delivery?

The MMCH will utilise WMS for real-time tracking and efficient inventory management, along with a Material Handling System

(MHS) that includes automated storage and retrieval systems, elevating transfer vehicles and narrow aisle systems for optimal space utilisation. Our Cloud-Based WMS, CO-SYS+ is a user-friendly platform designed to streamline ops and enhance the overall user experience with cybersecurity. This Cloud-based system will integrate with government agencies, airlines and other stakeholders to ensure enhanced functionality and increased efficiency.

To enhance cargo efficiency at NIA, AISATS is leveraging advanced technology and automation. Key digital initiatives include:

- ❖ Smart cargo management systems, such as a Single Window Airport Cargo Community System, for seamless stakeholder connectivity and improved transparency.

- ❖ An Automated Dimensioning and Digitisation System will capture accurate cargo data for faster acceptance and optimised capacity.

- ❖ A dedicated mobile app and e-kiosk systems will enhance accessibility, ensuring a smarter and faster cargo ecosystem at the NIA.

What steps are being taken to ensure cargo ops are environmentally sustainable at NIA?

NIA is committed to developing a sustainable airport with the goal of achieving net zero emissions. Sustainability has been a core principle, influencing the selection of planning and design teams, construction partners and concessionaires.

To minimise our CO₂ footprint and promote sustainable operations, the airport is also implementing various eco-friendly initiatives. This includes partnering with Mahindra Logistics Mobility to provide a premium, all-electric taxi service and ensuring our ground handling partner, Bird Group, operates a fully electric fleet of GSE.

Have you partnered with Indian Oil to operate fuel stations at the airport for passenger convenience?

The Air India SATS is solidifying this commitment to sustainability within the airport's operations by implementing eco-friendly initiatives. These initiatives include energy-efficient infrastructure such as LED lighting and solar power, green buildings with sustainable construction materials, eGSE, zero-waste policies, paperless cargo handling through e-AWB, energy-efficient refrigeration units in the Coolport, and smart cooling technologies.

These sustainable initiatives position AISATS as a leader in sustainable air cargo logistics, aligning with international green aviation standards. 🌱



Redefine loading bay ops with dock leveler solutions

Dock Levelers play significant role in enhancing efficiency and safety of loading and unloading operations. The company offers electro-hydraulic, pneumatic and mechanical dock levelers, each one designed to ensure smooth and safe transitions between vehicles and loading bays.



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Gandhi Automations offers innovative and automated dock leveler solutions for warehousing needs. The platform surface features an MS almond-shaped anti-slip checkered plate, with a robust 12+2 mm thickness,

Compliant with the latest EN 1398 safety standards, these levelers are ideal for facilities without an existing pit

providing enhanced durability and safety for optimal performance. Levelers are available in capacities of 6, 9, and 12 tonnes.

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 opera-



tions for forklifts and other equipment. Their self-cleaning lip-hinge system prevents the accumulation of dust and dirt, ensuring smooth operation.

TELESCOPIC LIP DOCK LEVELERS

Ideal for situations where vehicles cannot dock closely, such as sea containers or side-loading railway wagons these levelers come with an extendable lip that can reach up to one metre, providing flexibility in various loading scenarios.

EDGE-OF-DOCK LEVELERS

Compliant with the latest EN 1398 safety standards, they 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 consistent truck heights, such as warehouses, distribution centres, and retail facilities. EOD Levelers offer an efficient, space-saving solution for loading and unloading in

These levelers are suited for environments with truck heights, such as warehouses and distribution centres

locations where installing a pit-style leveler is not feasible. They offer reliable performance and safety for efficient loading operations.



FORKLIFT ROLL-OFF BARRIER LIP DOCK LEVELERS

They include a run-off protection, preventing accidental forklift roll-off when the overhead door is open, and no trailer is present. This one combines benefits of hydraulic dock levelers with added security of a barrier. They be seamlessly interlocked with existing doors and vehicle restraint systems, ensuring top-notch performance and security in every loading operation.

Jeena & Co., expands Bhiwandi facility to boost efficiency

Facility expansion includes a 20% rise in storage capacity, adding 1,000 additional pallet positions through heavy duty racking. Over 16,000 new location bins have been added to manage high volume freight and expand storage capabilities, says **Prediman Koul, Chief Executive Officer, Jeena and Company.**



CT Bureau

Jeena & Co., has expanded its storage infrastructure at Bhiwandi, Mumbai facility. The warehouse, spanning 1.10 lakh square feet, has a clear centre height of 50 feet and 30 feet shoulder height, providing a high-volume, scalable logistics environment.

The facility design includes G+7 and G+6 heavy-duty pallet racking system, G+7 multi-tier shelving system. The facility offers two forklifts, two stackers and 14 hand pallet trollies. Its flexible design aims to allow optimised storage



space, empowering sellers to boost their business. This capacity expansion includes a 20 per cent increase in storage capacity, adding 1,000 additional

pallet positions through heavy duty racking.

Extra 16,000 new location bins have been added to man-

age high volume freight and expand storage capabilities. the firm's Bhiwandi facility features a spiral chute to handle gravity-fed material for swift movement of smaller consignments from upper floors to the ground, cancelling disruptions between packaging and dispatch process.

"This expansion at Bhiwandi facility is meant to streamline ops and reduce TAT. We keep ahead of the times and upgrade as per customer needs. Proactive investment in infra and tech helps us to offer ease and convenience to our partners," Koul said. 📌

IWS to focus on NLP, last-mile delivery, innovation

IWS 2025, apart from the exhibition will host a series of conference sessions and workshops led by industry experts, covering topics such as digitisation in warehousing, last-mile delivery innovations and the impact of India's National Logistics Policy.

The 14th edition of the India Warehousing Show (IWS) is set to take place from June 26 to 28, 2025, at Yashobhoomi Convention Centre in Dwarka, New Delhi. As India's premier event for warehousing, logistics, automation, and supply chain management, IWS 2025 promises to be a landmark gathering for industry professionals. This year's exhibition will feature over 150 exhibi-

tors, including more than 50 first-time participants, showcasing the latest innovations in material handling, warehouse automation, smart logistics, and supply chain technologies. Attendees can expect over 100 live demonstrations, offering firsthand experience of cutting-edge solutions de-



signed to enhance operational efficiency. In addition to the exhibition, IWS 2025 will host

a series of conference sessions and workshops led by industry experts, covering topics such as digitisation in warehousing, last-mile delivery innovations, and the impact of India's National Logistics Policy. These sessions aim to provide valuable insights and foster discussions on the future of logistics and supply chain management.

TIACA, Pharma.Aero to boost healthcare, agriculture exports

This initiative ensures faster access to essential medicines and opens new market opportunities for farmers. The initiative is a strategic move to align with several UN SDGs, particularly those focusing on health, economic growth and sustainable industry, says **Frank Van Gelder, Secretary General, Pharma.Aero**.



CT Bureau

TIACA and Pharma.Aero have partnered for the 'Food and Farm for Health' initiative to harness air cargo for improving healthcare access and driving economic development in low and middle-income countries. The initiative, in collaboration with the Cool Chain Association (CCA) and the Humanitarian Logistics Association (HLA) seeks to utilise the potential of air cargo in a dual-purpose mission: Delivering life-saving pharmaceuticals into underserved regions and, on return flights, exporting locally grown perishable

products such as fruits, vegetables, and flowers to international markets.

The initiative is a logistical innovation and a strategic move to align with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focusing on health, economic growth, and sustainable industry.

Frank Van Gelder, Secretary General of Pharma.Aero, said, "The project is about leveraging air cargo to address two critical needs in low and middle-income countries: Healthcare access and economic empowerment. We,

at Pharma.Aero, recognised a critical gap and initiated this project to use air cargo as a dual-purpose tool, flying in life-saving pharmaceuticals and medical supplies,

while flying out perishables from local farmers to the Western markets."

This project not only improves the speed and ef-

Purpose

- Air cargo used for medicine and exports
- Supports healthcare access in underserved regions
- Boosts local economies via return flights
- Aligns with key UN Sustainable Goals

Collaboration

- Partners include TIACA, CCA, and HLA
- Enhances supply chain speed and resilience
- Builds equitable, smarter trade networks
- Supports humanitarian logistics and innovation





Frank Van Gelder
Secretary General
Pharma.Aero



Steven Polmans
Chair
TIACA



“This project was initiated to use air cargo as a dual-purpose tool, flying in life-saving pharma and drugs.”

efficiency of medical supply chains but also enhances economic resilience. He added, “By utilising available cargo space on return flights, we create a more cost-effective, efficient trade route. This approach not only ensures faster access to essential medicines and vaccines,

“Partnerships, connections and balance are going to be significant for the success of this initiative.”

but also opens new market opportunities for farmers, boosting local economies and providing better access to international markets.”

“Air cargo is more than a mode of transport. It is a critical lifeline for economies and communities across the globe. The completion of our Global Market Evolution Analysis marks a major milestone in understanding how perishable goods and pharmaceuticals move, especially in regions where access means everything,” emphasised Steven Polmans, Chair of

TIACA. Citing examples such as Kenya’s flower exports and India’s seafood trade, Polmans illustrated the transformative economic potential. He said, “Our work confirms that air freight is a catalyst for opportunity, health, and resilience. At TIACA, we are committed to building smarter, more equitable supply chains that serve both people and planet. This project is a key step in advancing that vision.”

Equally vital to the success of this initiative are the insights and infrastructure provided by the CCA and the HLA, which bring critical experience in temperature-sensitive logistics and humanitarian response.

“Partnerships, connections and balance are going to be key to the success of this initiative. Aligning healthcare providers in their mission to provide lifesaving treatments and preventative medicines to developing and emerging regions, and in turn giving those regions an economic reach for their home grown and produced perishable products is the balance we seek,” Ian Buck, board mem-

ber of the Cool Chain Association, said.

The CCA’s expertise in creating visible, measurable impact across supply chains will play a central role in ensuring the project’s effectiveness and scalability. “There is a need to find innovative ways to strengthen local supply chain capability. The air cargo industry is significant to the fast delivery of humanitarian aid, yet the last mile is still the greatest challenge. This project will provide valuable insights to support effective, sustainable change through improved cross-sector coordination, collaboration and knowledge sharing,” George Fenton, Chief Executive Officer, HLA, noted.

By tapping into international air cargo networks, the initiative bridges the gap between supply and demand in critical healthcare and plants the seeds for enduring economic development. It is also a shining example of how coordinated and innovative logistics can become a vehicle—not only for products—but also for lasting international impact. ✈️



Balancing global & local warehouse optimisation

Transitioning from traditional SCM to modern supply networks emphasises collaboration among interconnected entities, each with its own priorities. This shift necessitates managing conflicting objectives and information asymmetries, prioritising trade-offs enhancing collective performance.

Designing effective Warehouse Execution Systems (WES) requires adopting a high-level perspective to balance global and local optimisation. Elevating the viewpoint from ground-level processes to a strategic and holistic view can prevent the pitfalls of local optima and enhance overall efficiency. Global optimisation treats the warehouse as a unified entity, focusing on overall efficiency by aligning all processes and resources.

In contrast, local optimisation targets specific process-level KPIs, which can sometimes undermine overall performance. For instance, imagine a factory where ev-

“Local optimisation targets specific process-level KPIs, which can sometimes undermine overall performance.”

ery department excels in its individual KPIs—production meets daily targets, maintenance reports minimal downtime, and inventory is balanced—yet the factory struggles to meet overall goals. This is because locally optimised KPIs can create a false sense of achievement, while masking systemic inefficiencies.

Production line efficiency: A smoothly running production line might face shipment delays due to logistics



bottlenecks, affecting overall performance.

Maintenance downtime: Minimal machine downtime is beneficial, but poor scheduling could lead to underutilisation and lower output.

Inventory levels: Perfect stock levels mean little if raw materials are wasted or used inefficiently, driving up costs.

Transitioning from traditional supply chain management (SCM) to modern supply networks emphasises collaboration among interconnected entities, each with its own priorities. This shift necessitates managing conflicting objectives and information asymmetries, prioritising trade-offs that enhance collective performance. Global optimisation of warehouse operations becomes crucial, involving synchronising inbound and outbound processes, minimising bottlenecks, and ensuring cohesive functionality—much like a well-coordinated sports team.

Real-time data and practical insights are must to find this equilibrium. Monitoring global metrics such as TAT and storage utilisation, rather than solely focusing on local KPIs like individual system throughput, helps warehouses adapt to dynamic demands. Real-time operational dashboards help identify bottlenecks, therefore supporting seamless running and accomplishment of strategic objectives.

For instance, using a WES might result in a 20 to 30 per cent increase in order fulfilment rate. Furthermore, real-time inventory and order status visibility can cut up to 50 per cent off pick and packing errors. The enhancements help to significant cost savings apart from improving output.

Real-time data integration can enhance decision-making by offering up-to-the-minute information, therefore, enabling managers to make more quick, better-informed decisions. Efficiently opti-

mising resource distribution depends on responding to operational problems as they arise, thus, this agility is essential. Real-time inventory tracking guarantees accurate stock levels, therefore, minimising stockouts and lowering inventory costs. Many companies leverage demand projection and real-time inventory tracking to maximise warehouse operations and guarantee goods availability.



Bharanidharan S
Deputy General Manager
Software, Addverb

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

Logistics industry paves way for more sustainable future

In India, freight is likely to grow five-fold by 2050, highlighting need for adoption of sustainable practices. As nations work towards net zero commitments, the industry must evolve by integrating low-emission technologies, alternative fuels and efficient supply chain strategies.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Reducing carbon footprint:

Freight transport accounts for 8 to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In India, achieving net zero emissions by 2070 requires a shift towards more sustainable logistics solutions. Key strategies include transitioning to low-carbon fuels such as sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), sustainable marine fuel (SMF), use of EVs and investing in renewable energy to power logistics operations.

Many firms are experimenting with EVs and hybrid vehicles, optimising delivery routes, and shifting freight from road to rail to cut emissions. The government has been setting regulatory targets to encourage sustainable freight practices, including SAF blending mandates.

Eco-friendly packaging, transportation: Sustainability in logistics extends beyond fuel choices to packaging and transportation methods. Many businesses are adopting

biodegradable and recyclable materials to minimise waste. Pre-stretched plastic wrap film, for example, is being used to improve efficiency, while reducing plastic consumption.

Adoption of EVs is gaining momentum in last-mile delivery services, helping cut CO₂ footprint in urban areas. Some companies have partnered with clean energy firms to es-

“Adoption of EVs is gaining momentum in last-mile delivery, helping cut emissions in urban areas.”

tablish dedicated EV charging infrastructure, ensuring a reliable power supply from renewable sources. Additionally, intermodal transportation—integrating rail, road, and sea freight—has proven effective in optimising efficiency and reducing environmental impact.

More Low-Carbon Fuels and electric vehicles, alternative fuels and electric mobility are at the forefront of logistics transformation. The deployment of SAF in aviation, hydrogen fuel in trucking, and SMF in shipping are reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The impact of electric vehicles adoption depends on the energy mix used for charging. Countries investing in renewable energy are better positioned to maximise carbon reduction ben-



efits of electrified logistics. Government policies continue to drive advancements in sustainable transportation. India, for instance, has introduced EV incentives and mandates for increasing SAF use, contributing to low-carbon supply chains.

Environmental impact reduction: Technology plays a pivotal role in low-carbon supply chain practices. Companies are increasingly using AI, Machine Learning, and big data analytics to optimise routes, consolidate shipments, and improve load planning. Reverse logistics—recycling and reusing products—has gained traction, reduced waste and extending product life cycles.

Smart warehousing solutions, such as energy-efficient lighting, automated inventory management, and real-time tracking, contribute to reducing emissions and operational costs. Blockchain is being explored to enhance supply chain transparency, help businesses track emissions and meet regulatory compliance.

Regulatory and industry trends: Global and local regulations are shaping the future of more sustainable logistics. Policies such as RefuelEU Aviation and IMO's GHG strategy set clear targets for emission reductions in shipping and aviation. Sustainability is a responsibility for logistics industry. As firms, govts and stakeholders work towards decarbonisation, adoption of sustainable fuels, electric mobility, optimised supply chains, and eco-friendly packaging will drive meaningful changes.



Anish Kumar Jha
MD, Kuehne+Nagel India
Sri Lanka and the Maldives

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



Movements



ALLCARGO GATI India

Ravi Jakhar has joined as the Director, Strategy & Group CFO at Allcargo Group. In his new role, he will lead the Group's overall strategy and oversee CFOs across all group companies, including Allcargo Logistics' wholly-owned global subsidiary ECU Worldwide.



ECU WORLDWIDE India

Camilo Quintero has been appointed as VP, Key Account Management for North America at ECU Worldwide, Allcargo Logistics wholly-owned subsidiary. He will drive innovation and continued growth as he expands ECU Worldwide's footprint.



TIACA UK

Roos Bakker has joined as the Manager Business Development and Contract Management, CTSN, at TIACA as the next Chair, for 2026-2027 period. Steven Polmans led TIACA for the past six years. Now TIACA looks forward to working with Roos.

ROADCAST India

Sridhar Iyer has joined as Chief Business Officer at Roadcast. With 30 years of experience across advertising, marketing and digital transformation, he brings with him foresight and depth, traits set to play a vital role in shaping Roadcast's future.



OPEN NETWORK FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE India

Vibhor Jain has been appointed as the Acting CEO, Digital Commerce, at Open Network with immediate effect. His appointment marks a move toward centralised leadership during a critical phase for ONDC.



HONG KONG AIR CARGO Hong Kong

Hakan Bulat has joined as the President at Hong Kong Air Cargo. Having been engaged in air cargo and logistics business for over 20 years, Bulat brings experience from his roles in leading corporations. His appointment marks a milestone for the airline.



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