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ICA 2025 mark a decade of excellence in logistics

The India Cargo Awards 2025, held recently in New Delhi, honoured distinction in the air cargo sector, recognising trailblazers, game changers, and future leaders. The awards focused on the role the sector plays in fortifying global connectivity, uplifting stakeholders, and inspiring India's economic growth.

 CT Bureau

The India Cargo Awards marked 10 years in 2025. Held in New Delhi recently, the ceremony honoured excellence in the air cargo and logistics industry. Illustriously known as the 'Oscars of the Industry,' the

Awards recognised visionaries, innovators, and companies and their contributions towards driving growth, resilience, and transformation in the logistics industry.

Chief Guest Piyush Srivastava, Senior Economic Advisor, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, lauded the sector's role in powering trade and connectivity. Guest of Honour Pankaj Kumar, Joint Secretary Logistics, DPIIT, Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, stressed the importance of reforms and collaborations in shaping the future of logistics.

They were joined by other dignitaries, including Jivisha Joshi Gangopadhyay, Deputy Secretary, International Cooperation, Ease of Doing Business and Salt, and Sagar Kadu, Director, Logistics from DPIIT, Union Ministry

of Commerce and Industry. Among those who attended from the industry included SL Sharma, Chairman Emeri-

The awards reinforced the sector's significance in driving the country's ambition of emerging as a global logistics powerhouse

tus, Skyways Group; CK Govil, Former President, The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI); Sanjiv Edward, President, Air Cargo Forum of India (ACFI) and CEO, Cargo and Logistics, DIAL; Arun Kumar, Former President, Association, AMTOI; Cyrus Katgara, Partner, Jeena & Company, and Sanjeet, Mentor, DDP Group.





Together, they performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony and unveiled the Cargo Coffee Table Handbook. Speaking on the occasion, Sanjeet remarked, “The Awards are a celebration of the visionaries, companies, infra, and innovations shaping the future of air cargo and logistics.”

Addressing the gathering, Piyush Srivastava said, “The Awards inspire all of us to perform, reform, and transform. Such progress cannot be achieved by an individual or one sector alone. It requires collaboration between industry, government, and the wider ecosystem. The industry has been playing its part, and I appreciate the development of community systems such as iCLASS at Mumbai Airport, alongside the govt’s broader logistics initiatives and national logistics policy. EoDB remains a key priority and significant reforms have been undertaken, including the removal of free streaming of TP cargo

last year — a milestone that strengthens India’s ambition of becoming a transparent logistics hub. While challenges remain, I am confident that with collective effort, the sector will continue to grow. Today is about celebrating achievements, and I extend my best wishes to all the winners and contributors driving India’s logistics success.”

Pankaj Kumar said, “At DPIIT, our endeavour is to bring all stakeholders onto a common platform through tech, policy measures, and regular industry interactions. It is important to recognise that the real contributors to India’s logistics growth are the private players — cargo terminal operators, logistics providers, warehouse operators, and many others. The government’s role is to

make their journey easier by simplifying regulations, driving policy reforms, and extending financial and non-financial support. I assure you my department will continue working to ensure an enabling environment where the logistics sector can thrive and contribute even more to India’s growth story.”

With categories celebrating trailblazers, game changers, and future leaders, the Awards highlighted the pivotal role of air cargo and logistics in boosting global connectivity, enabling seamless trade, and powering India’s economic growth. Over the past decade, the Awards have evolved into a benchmark of excellence, honouring visionaries and enterprises that are redefining industry standards

through innovation, resilience, and collaboration.

A decade of the Awards was not only a celebration of achievements but also a reflection of the sector’s journey towards becoming smarter, faster, and globally competitive. By recognising organisations that have embraced tech, built transformative infra, and contributed to inclusive growth, the Awards reinforced the industry’s significance in driving the country’s ambition of emerging as a global logistics powerhouse.

More than just an evening of recognition, the event served as a source of inspiration — encouraging stakeholders to push boundaries, embrace reforms, and shape the next phase of India’s logistics growth story. 🦋





EXPRESS CARGO DRIVES GROWTH TRAJECTORY

The future of Indian air cargo industry will be defined by the growing demand for express and time-definite services. What began as a specialised solution a decade ago, is now a mainstream necessity across sectors, such as pharma, healthcare, perishables, food, retail, and luxury. Demand for express deliveries is forcing LSPs to adopt innovative solutions to boost efficiency, which is the mantra for staying competitive. Speed, transparency, and sustainability will set the winners apart, making express air cargo not just an industry trend, but a strategic driver of India's economic growth and global competitiveness.



Ritika Arora Bhola

India's air cargo industry is undergoing a transformation. At the heart of this shift lies the rising demand for express and time-definite deliveries, which has increased tremendously in the past decade.

With rising exposure and internet penetration, especially in tier II and III cities, India's economy is on a growth trajectory. Efficiency has also become the core differentiator for manufacturers, logistics service providers (LSPs), and retailers.

With this shift, consumers are conditioned to demand speed and certainty,

and Indian air cargo has emerged as the most reliable mode of transport for time-sensitive goods and express deliveries. The growth of express services and the

insistence on guaranteed timelines are reshaping cargo operational strategies and redefining the long-term trajectory of the industry in the country.

Highlights



- India has become one of the fastest-growing e-commerce markets, driven by increased internet penetration, affordable smartphones, and digital payment adoption
- Consumers now expect their orders to be delivered within a day or two, even when they are shipped across states

Impact



- As MNCs establish or expand production bases in India, the demand for quick movement of raw materials, components, and finished products has surged
- Industries such as electronics, semiconductors, pharma, automotive, and textiles are dependent on reliable and time-definite deliveries

E-COMMERCE EXPLOSION

The major factor driving this trend is the rise of e-commerce. Over the past decade, India has become one of the fastest-growing e-commerce markets in the world, driven by increased internet penetration, affordable smartphones, and digital payment adoption. Consumers now expect their orders to be delivered within a day or two, even when they are shipped across states. Companies, such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and other niche e-commerce platforms are demanding that logistics players compress delivery timelines, which, in turn, has elevated the role of air cargo. With the rise of same-day de-



liveries, and 10-minute deliveries introduced by Zepto and Blinkit, air express services have become the backbone of e-commerce fulfilment, during high-demand seasons such as festive sales or flash discount events, where millions of shipments are delivered within tight timelines.

RELIANCE ON AIR FREIGHT

Supply chain globalisation has heightened the reliance on express air freight. With initiatives such as 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', India is positioning itself as a manufacturing hub and integrating more deeply into global supply chains. As MNCs establish or expand production bases in India, the demand for quick movement of raw materials, components, and finished products has surged. Industries such as electronics, semiconductors, pharma, automotive, and textiles are dependent on reliable and time-definite deliveries. In such sectors, delays of even a few hours can disrupt assembly lines or impact market launches, making air cargo a natural

choice for maintaining efficiency and competitiveness.

Healthcare and pharma represent another dimension of this growth story. India is one of the largest producers of generic medicines and vaccines in the world. Its role became particularly prominent during the pandemic when India supplied life-saving vaccines to many nations. Time-definite and temperature-controlled air cargo services were indispensable to ensure these products reached their destinations within strict timelines and without damage.

The pandemic experience accelerated investments in specialised cold chain infrastructure at Indian airports and created long-term demand for express air cargo in healthcare logistics, a trend that shows no sign of slowing. This growing demand is forcing LSPs and airlines to reshape their delivery strategies. Cross-border trade is expected to surge in the coming years.

ROLE OF AIRLINES

Airlines have been gearing up

to meet the increasing demand, recognising the profitability that comes with it. Carriers are increasing flight frequencies to support express services, and dedicated freighters have begun to emerge as a viable business model, sup-

Logistics firms are investing in advanced infra, from automated cargo terminals to express facilities at tier I airports

plementing the capacity of cargo carried in the bellies of pax airlines.

Logistics firms are investing in advanced infrastructure, from automated cargo terminals to dedicated express facilities at airports, such as Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru. These hubs are being developed along with streamlined customs processes, enhanced security systems, and digital tracking capabilities to

accelerate cargo movement and time-definite deliveries.

AUTOMATION DRIVING CHANGE

Digitalisation across the logistics chain is enabling end-to-end visibility, real-time shipment tracking, and predictive analytics to optimise routes and timelines. E-way bills, digital customs platforms, and paperless cargo documentation are reducing administrative delays. Industry players are deploying IoT-enabled devices and sensors to monitor cargo conditions, especially for pharmaceuticals and perishables. AI is being used to forecast demand surges during festive seasons, disruptions caused by weather, and infrastructure bottlenecks, helping logistics providers allocate resources more effectively. These tech innovations are strengthening customer trust and ensuring express delivery services are time-definite.

Govt initiatives, such as PMGS and NLP play a vital role in shaping air cargo as they have fostered development of multimodal logistics hubs, better air cargo infra and smoother integration between airports, highways, and ports. The government has prioritised faster customs clearance and improved security screening at airports to facilitate express shipments. By encouraging private sector participation in building cargo terminals and by promoting digitisation, and open sky policy, policy-makers are enabling the industry to handle rising volumes of time-sensitive goods.

BOTTLENECKS

Capacity constraints remain an issue, particularly during peak demand, when volumes spike. Many airports in tier II and III cities still lack the specialised infrastructure required to process express cargo efficiently, limiting the reach of time-definite services beyond metros. There are environmental concerns also — the need for frequent short-haul flights to meet delivery commitments contribute to higher emissions. Addressing these challenges requires a mix of investment, innovation, and sustainability initiatives.

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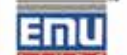
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Despite these hurdles, opportunities outweigh the challenges. The express cargo segment in India is projected to grow at a faster rate than the broader logistics market, driven by sustained e-commerce growth, expanding manufacturing activity, and consumer expectations.

As regional consumption patterns evolve, there will be a surge in demand for express deliveries not just in metros but also in smaller towns and cities. This will prompt utilisation of regional airports, and integration of air cargo with road and rail networks for last-mile connectivity. Drones and electric aircraft are opening new avenues for efficiency and sustainability in the years to come by revolutionising short-haul and last-mile express deliveries.

OUTLOOK


The future of the air cargo industry is moving along with the rise of express and time-definite services. What was once reserved exclusively for



high-value shipments, has today evolved into a daily expectation, cutting across industries, and shaping consumer habits. In this fast-changing environment, success belongs to those who can move goods quickly, and do so with reliability, openness, and care for

the planet. For India, the story goes beyond just logistics. The surge in express air cargo reflects a larger shift — one where speed, connectivity, and trust are becoming the backbone of our economy. It is not just a trend for the industry; it is a strategic edge for the coun-

try, helping businesses grow and consumers feel more connected than ever before.

 discussed with industry experts if the express cargo industry will drive air cargo growth despite challenges and hurdles.

Demand for rush deliveries has risen

“As the e-commerce, healthcare logistics, and manufacturing sectors continue to expand, need for speed in shipments has intensified. Consumers and businesses now expect faster delivery timelines, within 24–72 hours and a surge in express air freight services. This demand prompts carriers and LSPs to invest in freighters and advanced tracking technologies and expand hub-and-spoke networks to enhance service efficiency and visibility. Integrators are expanding their global cargo networks, while carriers are converting passenger aircraft into freighters to meet short-term spikes.”



Keku Bomi Gazder
CEO & MD
Aviapro Logistic Services

Carriers are converting pax aircraft into freighters to meet short-term spikes

Express cargo is about reliability and visibility

“The demand for express and time-definite deliveries is redefining air cargo from being a capacity provider to becoming a time-critical solutions partner. Traditional cargo flows were planned weeks in advance, but today, customers expect near-instant fulfilment. This shift is forcing airlines, forwarders, and tech providers to invest in smarter networks, digital booking platforms, and AI route planning. Express cargo is no longer about speed — it is about reliability, predictability, and visibility. Time-definite logistics is becoming the engine that will push air cargo into an agile, tech-enabled future.”



Amit Maheshwari
Founder and CEO
Softlink Global

Time-definite logistics is an engine that will push air cargo into a tech-enabled future

Air cargo evolving into enabler of growth

“The appetite for express and time-definite deliveries is reshaping the air cargo sector. In a digitised economy, air cargo is no longer a facilitator of global trade — it is the fulcrum upon which supply chain competitiveness rests. This demand is compelling carriers, forwarders, and integrators to invest in agile networks, advanced digital platforms, and predictive tech that guarantee reliability and speed. The result is a structural shift. Air cargo is evolving into an enabler of growth from pharma to high-value manufacturing. Express cargo is fuelling the industry's role in the global economy.”



Amit Tandon
CEO & MD
Asia Shipping India

Express air cargo is fuelling the industry's role in the global economy

PPPs key to upgrading airports, logistics hubs

“To develop cargo infra for Viksit Bharat 2047, govt policies must enable seamless multimodal transport, logistics digitisation, and green incentives. PPPs are key to upgrading airports, seaports, and logistics hubs. Digital platforms, such as ULIP can unify operations under one system. Streamlined land acquisition, automated customs, and single-window clearances, help build a faster, more sustainable logistics ecosystem in the future. Challenges include outdated infra, fragmented regulations, and weak first-and last-mile connectivity. Unlocking multimodal potential requires seamless integration, among others.”



Afzal Malbarwala
Managing Director
Galaxy Freight

Unlocking multimodal potential requires seamless integration

Cargo sector explores greener aircraft, routes

“Airports are investing in express handling facilities, digitised customs clearance, and 24x7 border operations to support faster turnaround times. Airlines and logistics providers are deploying more freighters and converting pax aircraft to cargo use, especially on long-haul routes — Europe and North America. Predictive analytics, real-time tracking, and automated sorting systems are becoming standard to meet the precision required for time-definite deliveries. The cargo industry is exploring greener aircraft, optimised routing, and multimodal integration to balance speed along with sustainability.”



Dilip Sahu
Director, EPS Worldwide
Integrated Logistics

The cargo industry is exploring options to balance speed with sustainability



Focus on adopting latest tracking systems

“The rising demand for express and time-definite deliveries has elevated air cargo from being a transportation mode to an enabler of growth. Sectors, such as pharma, fashion, automotive, electronics, and FMCG depend on assured timelines and reliability. This has accelerated investments in automation, technology-led visibility, and multimodal integration to ensure speed with precision. Our focus was on building express networks, adopting advanced tracking systems, and ensuring faster turnaround across key lanes. The express ecosystem will continue to reshape customer expectations.”



Aditya Shah
Executive Director
V-Trans & CEO, V-Xpress

Investments in automation, multimodal integration to ensure speed with precision

GST reforms to boost festive consumption

“The surge in demand for express and time-definite deliveries is reshaping the logistics landscape. Now, customers are not only looking for speed but also end-to-end reliability, and this is where the express business comes into play. The rapid growth of e-commerce and cross-border trade have fuelled this demand, as businesses need predictable supply chain to reach customers across domestic and global markets. The recent GST reforms coupled with low inflation and favourable monsoon outlook, are set to boost discretionary consumption in this festive season.”



Ketan Kulkarni
Managing Director, CEO
Allcargo Gati and GESCPL

Rapid growth of e-commerce and cross-border trade have fuelled demand

Time-sensitive deliveries, express cargo boost growth

“Time-definite and express demand is one of the biggest structural forces driving current air cargo growth — it is changing how airlines operate, how forwarders price and package services, how airports are utilised, and what customers expect from end-to-end logistics. Air cargo demand has rebounded post-pandemic, being driven largely by e-commerce, and time-sensitive shipments. Demand spikes from fast, low-cost e-commerce players have tightened capacity on key trade lanes, forcing rate and capacity allocation shifts. There has been a surge in demand for cold-chain pharma express shipments.”



Malcolm D'souza
COO, Airfreight
Jeena & Company

Air cargo has rebounded largely post-pandemic by e-commerce products



Airlines–GSSA join hands, turn obstacles into progress

Indian cargo market presents challenges, such as fragmented demand, infrastructure bottlenecks, pricing, undercutting hamper efficiency. Building strong Airline–GSSAs partnerships into long-term collaborations, with shared risks and rewards, are best positioned to survive in this dynamic landscape.



Ritika Arora Bhola

When it comes to air cargo, airlines and their General Sales and Service Agents (GSSAs) are like two wheels on the same cart — neither can move forward without the other. For airlines, those entering, or expanding in a particular market, GSSAs act as their local eyes, ears, and hands. They have all the market knowledge, customer connections, and operational support that air-

lines may find difficult to get on their own. On the other hand, airlines give GSSAs an opportunity to be a part of a global network.

The magic happens when this relationship goes beyond a transactional one and turns into a long-term partnership built on trust, transparency, and a shared commitment to growth. Building strong airline-GSSA partnerships in India requires a balance of trust, transparency, and adaptability,

underpinned by a shared vision for long-term growth. Success depends on the ability of GSSAs and airlines to leverage each other's strengths. Airlines bring in brand reputation, global network, and service quality expectations, while GSSAs contribute detailed market knowledge, customer relationships, and cost-effective sales expertise.

Clear communication, defined responsibilities, and a performance-driven approach are fundamental to avoiding overlaps and conflicts. Airlines that view GSSAs as strategic partners rather than sales contractors benefit from stronger yield management, market penetration in tier II and III cities, and improved customer service delivery.

TECH ADOPTION CRUCIAL

Technology integration is a critical factor, as real-time data sharing on capacity, pricing, and customer demand help both parties optimise decision-making and enhance transparency. Investments in training and skill development ensure that GSSAs are aligned with airline service standards and regulatory requirements, thereby maintaining consistency in customer experience. Mutual trust built between the airlines and GSSAs through consistent performance reviews, incentives tied to KPIs, and joint marketing initiatives strengthen long-term collaborations. While these factors can create a robust framework for success, the operational environment in India presents challenges that airlines and GSSAs must navigate.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The air cargo market is highly

fragmented; diverse demand patterns across regions lead to complexities in distribution and pricing. Stiff competition among GSSAs often results in aggressive pricing and undercutting, which can dilute service quality and affect airline profit margins. Regulatory compliance in conformation with DGCA rules, customs processes, and airport security protocols, requires constant vigilance and increases operational overheads. Infrastructure constraints such as con-

Trained experts with specialised knowledge of global documentation, DG handling, and logistics are required

gested airports, limited cargo handling facilities, and inadequate cold chain capabilities in many regions hamper efficiency and reliability.

Also, the dominance of e-commerce and express shipments has shifted market expectations toward timely deliveries. This pressurises GSSAs to deliver with speed and reliability, despite systemic bottlenecks. Airlines often face challenges in ensuring that their GSSA partners can balance cost efficiency with premium service delivery in a dynamic environment.

Another hurdle is the uneven adoption of digital platforms. While some GSSAs are investing in AI-driven booking and tracking systems, others continue to rely on manual processes, thereby

Highlights

- Investments in training and skill development ensure that the GSSAs are aligned with airline service standards
- Technology is a critical factor that helps in decision-making

Impact

- Airlines face challenges in ensuring that their GSSA partners can balance cost efficiency with premium service delivery in a dynamic environment
- Another hurdle is the uneven adoption of digital platforms

creating inconsistency in operational performance.

Skilled workforce shortage is another concern. Trained cargo experts with specialised knowledge of global documentation, DG handling, and multimodal logistics, are exceedingly rare. Financial risks such as delayed payments from freight forwarders, and currency fluctuations also add pressure to the relationship.

GSSA-AIRLINE PARTNERSHIPS

The success of airline-GSSA partnerships depend on contractual pacts and on the ability to jointly innovate, invest in digitalisation, and respond to evolving market dynamics. Airlines empowering GSSAs with technological tools, flexible pricing models, and adequate marketing support are likely to secure their loyalty and performance, while GSSAs focusing on transparent reporting, customer-centric solutions, and operational excellence will earn the trust of their airline partners.



Variations in customs can delay cargo clearance

“GSSAs need systems in sync with airline platforms for real-time data exchange, enhancing supply chain visibility, streamlining booking, and tracking processes. Mutual trust and aligned incentives, such as revenue-sharing models, ensuring GSSAs prioritise yield optimisation, and foster a shared purpose that maximises returns. In markets, such as India, Southeast Asia, and Africa, GSSAs face complex regulatory issues, infra gaps, and intense competition. Variations in customs processes, inconsistent policies, and regulatory changes create delay in cargo clearance. Inadequate airport infra complicates efficient operations.”



Praveen Narayanan
Vice President, Asia Pacific,
Group Concorde

GSSAs need systems in sync with airline platforms for real-time data exchange



GSSAs are an extension of brand of airlines

“Airlines expect their GSSA partners to go beyond sales and revenue and to act as an extension of their brand. This requires consistency in service delivery, market representation, and customer engagement. Airlines demand visibility in sales performance and route profitability. GSSAs must be innovative and step away from the mundane way of working to offer airlines fresh approaches to generate revenue. A GSSA must combine local expertise with digital capabilities and proactive relationship management to help airlines scale faster. In India, taxation, licensing, and evolving aviation policies can be challenging.”



Abhishek Goyal
Executive Director and CEO
Aeroprime Group

Airlines seek visibility in sales performance and route profitability

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Airlines look for partners who know local markets

“The airline-GSSA partnership is about trust, transparency, and performance. Airlines expect more than sales — they look for partners who understand local markets, build forwarder relationships, and deliver measurable results aligned with their global strategy. In high-growth markets, such as India, Southeast Asia, and Africa, opportunities are immense: For GSSAs, the mandate is clear — deliver market intelligence, compliance strength, and strong forwarder networks.

The success of the GSSA model lies in its ability to represent airlines as true partners, driving air cargo growth sustainably and reliably.”



Jalpa H Vithalani
Group Managing Director,
Global Aviation Services

Success of GSSA model lies in its ability to act as true partners for airlines

Fairness in revenue sharing gives confidence

“Trust, communication, and shared goals are critical to building a strong partnership between an airline and its GSSAs. Transparency in pricing, reporting, and market information makes relations stronger. Fairness in revenue sharing and respecting agreements gives confidence, and acts as a boost to the relationship. Infra is a major issue, as most airports lack reliable handling and ground services. Regulatory frameworks are complex. Frequent policy changes and licensing requirements add to costs. Bureaucracy slows down permits, while corruption increases compliance risks for GSSAs.”



Biplob Barik
CEO & Co-founder
Citrus Freight

Transparency in pricing and market information makes relations stronger



GSSAs assist airlines to tap into potential markets

“Emerging markets such as India, Southeast Asia, and Africa offer growth potential, each with unique dynamics. India is establishing itself as a ‘China+1’ hub, attracting global supply chains and driving demand. Southeast Asia continues to benefit from booming e-commerce and diversified trade flows. Africa, with its expanding trade corridors and growing logistics infra, is increasingly positioned as a gateway to global commerce. By combining digital agility with expertise, the GSSAs enable their airline partners to tap into these high-potential markets confidently and sustainably.”



Aytekin Saray
CEO
Global GSA Group

India is building itself as a ‘China+1’ hub, attracting global supply chains

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ACFI debuts Andhra Chapter, spurs industry progress

The launch of ACFI's Andhra Pradesh Chapter in Visakhapatnam showcased the state's rising significance in the logistics and air cargo sector, attracting top policymakers and senior executives for insightful discussions and collaboration.

The Air Cargo Forum India (ACFI) inaugurated its Andhra Pradesh Chapter in Visakhapatnam, in the presence of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, along with BC Janardhan Reddy, Minister for Infrastructure and Investment, and TG Bharat, Minister for Industries and Commerce. The launch attracted more than 350 delegates, including senior leaders from the air cargo, logistics, trade, and industry sectors, highlighting the state's growing prominence as a hub for air cargo and logistics.

The event featured a CEO Roundtable where critical industry issues, including the Open Sky Policy and Double Dipping, were discussed. The ACFI representatives, including Sanjiv Edward, President and Satish Lakkaraju, Chairman, presented recommendations, which were well received by the Chief



Minister, reflecting strong government support. Edward said, "With the ACFI driving growth and the government developing integrated logistics hubs, Andhra Pradesh is poised to emerge as

a leader in Eastern India's logistics landscape." Lakkaraju added, "Our discussions underscore the ACFI's commitment to addressing industry challenges and enabling sustainable growth."



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Temperature
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Unbroken
Cold Chain

Temperature
Controlled

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Cold Chain

Cool Dolly

Shantanu Bhadkamkar elected new President of AMTOI

The Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India hosted its 26th AGM in Mumbai. The new MC for the 2025–26 term was elected during the AGM wherein Bhadkamkar was elected President. Sudhir Kohakade, DDG, Shipping, graced the gathering. Members were also felicitated with Loyalty Certificates.



CT Bureau

The Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India (AMTOI) hosted its 26th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Mumbai. The gathering brought together members, industry leaders, and stakeholders from across the shipping and logistics fraternity.

The AGM was graced by Sudhir Kohakade, Deputy Director General (DDG), Shipping, as Honoured Guest. Kohakade presented the new and updated DG Shipping website and highlighted the simplified procedure for renewal of MTO licences, which was well received by the industry.

During the AGM, AMTOI reviewed its key initiatives in

policy advocacy, trade facilitation, capacity building, and digital transformation. Member milestones were also celebrated with the felicitation of companies completing 100, 75, and 25 years, along with the presentation of Loyalty Certificates to members marking 20 and 10 years with the Association. Following the AGM, the association announced its new team of office-bearers for the upcoming term — 2025–26.



(Left) Arun Kumar with Shantanu Bhadkamkar



HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ **President:** Shantanu Bhadkamkar
- ➔ **Vice President:** Devpal Menon
- ➔ **Honorary Secretary:** Haresh Lalwani
- ➔ **Honorary Treasurer:** Vasant Pathak



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DYP, TBS, SVX and Many More



GST and 2047 roadmap headline AMTOI's Kolkata meet

AMTOI held an MC meeting in Kolkata, gathering industry leaders to deliberate on key policy reforms. The MC provided a platform for stakeholders to exchange views on strengthening multimodal logistics, enhancing EoDB, and aligning industry growth with the govt's vision for a globally competitive ecosystem.



CT Bureau

The Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India (AMTOI) held its MC meeting in Kolkata hosted by the Eastern Region Chapter. The meeting was followed by an annual seminar on logistics.

Suresh Kumar Rekhawat, Vice President & International Logistics Head, PCBL Chemicals Ltd., graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He spoke at length about Amrit Kaal and how 'India is well on its way to becoming the third largest economy, despite US tariffs.' Rekhawat appreciated the yeoman service of the freight forwarders and opined that they must be treated as partners in growth.

Subhojit Roy, Advocate and Partner, Victor Moses & Co, was invited as the Guest of Honour. He said, "Laws must be well-understood and should never be assumed or taken for granted." He gave an



insiders' view on the application of various laws.

Arun Kumar, former President, AMTOI said, "AMTOI remains in touch with policy makers on matters relating to multimodalism and forwards its suggestions to them. AMTOI assists in MTO registration and renewal and has a grievance redressal cell." He informed, "The AMTOI has a say in drafting maritime-related laws, writing to the GST

Council, and has also taken up the matter relating to Sea Cargo Manifest and Transhipment Regulations (SCMTR)."

Brij Lakhotia, Convenor ERC, said, "The Eastern Region holds a place of importance in our nation's logistics and supply chain landscape. With its unique geographical position, rich natural resources, vibrant trade routes, and access to domestic hinterland and international markets through

ports, such as Kolkata, Haldia, Paradip, and Vizag. the East is emerging as the logistics hub of the future." Emphasising on multimodalism, he also said that AMTOI is the only body that caters to MTO benefits.

The seminar, attended by industry veterans, concluded with networking cocktails and dinner. It also provided a platform for industry professionals to connect and discuss key issues. 🌟

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- Discover efficient logistics solutions for all goods including perishables
- Explore innovative processes for seamless global transportation



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Samir J Shah new ACAAI President, sets sights on policy challenges

ACAAI held its AGM and announced the appointment of Samir J Shah as President. Vikram Kumar was elected Vice President, Chaitaly Mehta as Honorary Secretary, and Dinesh Krishnan as Honorary Treasurer. The new MC pledged to strengthen the competitiveness of India's air cargo sector.

 CT Bureau

The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI), the apex body representing IATA cargo agents since 1970, recently held its Annual General Meeting (AGM), bringing together members from across the country to deliberate on industry issues and priorities.

At the meeting, the association also announced the appointment of Samir J Shah as its new President, underscoring its commitment to strong and inclusive leadership. Joining him on the newly elected Managing Committee are Vikram Kumar as Vice President, Chaitaly Mehta as Honorary Secretary, and Dinesh Krishnan as Honorary Treasurer.

The new Managing Committee (MC) has pledged to address key policy challenges,



particularly the impact of GST 2.0 on air freight, which has

created financial stress for the SMEs that constitute most

IATA agents. Representing around 1,000 agents who form the backbone of India's air cargo logistics, ACAAI reaffirmed its mission to safeguard the interests of members, while driving growth, competitiveness, and sustainability in the sector.



NEW MC MEMBERS

- ➔ Samir J Shah
President
- ➔ Vikram Kumar
Vice President
- ➔ Chaitaly Mehta
Honorary Secretary
- ➔ Dinesh Krishnan
Honorary Treasurer



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Empowering Indian trade with Cathay Cargo's global reach

Cathay Cargo, with its strong freighter fleet and belly-hold network, plays a vital role in linking India's growing export sectors to global markets. Leveraging Hong Kong as a strategic hub and the GBA's seamless intermodal links, it delivers speed, reliability, and specialised solutions. Cathay Cargo remains a partner in powering the nation's air cargo growth.



Rajesh Menon
Regional Head of Cargo - South
Asia, Middle East and Africa
Cathay Cargo

Can you outline your current freighter network or belly-hold capacity?

Cathay Cargo operates a fleet comprising 20 Boeing 747Fs, including six Boeing 747-400ERFs (Extended Range Freighters) and 14 Boeing 747-8Fs. In addition to its dedicated freighters, Cathay Cargo leverages the belly space of the Cathay Pacific's passenger aircraft, enhancing cargo capacity to efficiently ferry a diverse range of goods across our extensive global network. Looking to the future, Cathay Cargo has placed an order for six next-generation Airbus A350 wide-body freighters, with the right to acquire an additional 20. Currently, we operate 13 weekly freighters between Hong Kong and Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai, in addition to utilising belly space on Cathay Pacific's passenger flights from Bengaluru,



Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai.

Which commodities are growing fastest (e.g. pharmaceuticals, perishables, electronics, automotive parts)?

From an Indian export perspective, electronics and perishables (mostly from Mumbai and Chennai) are experiencing rapid growth. Meanwhile, automobiles including electric vehicles, and

pharmaceuticals are steadily increasing. Our top solutions by tonnage include Cathay Secure for all valuables and vulnerable items (e.g. iPhones), Dangerous Goods, Fresh, Pharma, Expert (Cars, engines), Courier, and Live Animals, in that order.

What makes you one of the world's greatest service brands, and can you share more about the different solutions you offer?

Cathay Cargo has developed a suite of service options comprising nine specialist solutions, each tailored with distinct procedures, safety protocols, and handling methods. This suite covers a range of cargo needs, from temperature-sensitive shipments and live animals to high-value items and urgent deliveries, ensuring every shipment receives the specialised care it requires. Cathay Cargo is one of the several carriers that accepts all nine classes of DGs with our

Cathay Cargo leverages the belly space of Cathay Pacific's pax aircraft, enhancing capacity to ferry a diverse range of goods

Cathay Dangerous Goods solution, which means customers benefit from a single, trusted partner capable of handling the spectrum of HAZMAT — flammable liquids, explosive substances, radioactive materials, and environmentally hazardous goods. By adhering to





global regulations and enhancing our operational standards, we transform complexity into a competitive advantage to offer customers reliable and compliant solutions.

Cathay Cargo offers a range of fire containment bags and fire-resistant containers for lithium-ion batteries. Our built-up system increases space efficiency by 50 per cent for larger shipments and safely accommodates larger battery sizes, exceeding typical containment capabilities.

Besides, Cathay Cargo Terminal uses AI to detect undeclared DGs concealed along with general cargo. This innovative approach enhances detection accuracy, while minimising processing delays, helping prevent safety risks before shipment. Both

Cathay Cargo and the Cathay Cargo Terminal in Hong Kong hold the full set of IATA Centre of Excellence for Independent Validators (CEIV) certifications, including CEIV Fresh, CEIV Pharma, CEIV Live Animals, and CEIV Lithium Batteries, demonstrating Cathay Cargo's expertise in handling special cargo.

Can you tell us more about The Greater Bay Area and seamless intermodal connectivity?

The Greater Bay Area (GBA) is Cathay Cargo's extended home hub, and the manufacturing heart of the Chinese Mainland, playing host to global players in e-commerce, high-tech, and consumer electronics. Our innovative intermodal services between Hong

Cathay Cargo offers daily freighter flights to Guangzhou and trucking solutions to and across the GBA from our hub at HKIA

Kong International Airport and Cathay Cargo Terminal in Dongguan exemplify Hong Kong's strategic role as a gateway linking the Chinese Mainland to the world. By pioneering upstream cargo acceptance in Dongguan for exports and now offering direct air-sea transport for inbound shipments, Cathay Cargo enhances efficiency and connectivity in the GBA.

Cathay Cargo offers daily freighter flights to Guangzhou and trucking solutions to and across the GBA from our hub at HKIA, either through a scheduled service or on an ad hoc basis. Cathay Cargo pioneers in intermodal perishables imports into the GBA through the Air-Land Fresh Lane. Perishable shipments can travel from overseas via

HKIA to a temperature-controlled inspection facility in Zhuhai, then onwards across the rest of the GBA with a transshipment certificate using chilled trucks, all under the same air waybill, enabling expedited, seamless cool-chain transit from origin to destination. The Air-Land Fresh Lane initiative is a differentiator for perishables moving into GBA markets, including India-origin cargo transiting via HKIA.

How do you help Indian businesses in their growth story?

Cathay Cargo's pivotal focus lanes from India are to China, Northeast Asia, and Southwest Pacific. With the expanding capacity from our Hong Kong hub, the scheduling flexibility provided by the Three-runway system, and our strengthened intermodal links into the GBA, we see strong opportunities for India's customers. The country's fast-growing manufacturing sector, driven by the government's 'Make in India' initiative, is fuelling demand for robust logistics and connectivity to achieve the 10 MMT air cargo target by 2030.



BCBA AGM spurs trade talks, unveils new logistics app

The Brihanmumbai Custom Brokers Association (BCBA) Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner celebration brought together key stakeholders from the cargo, logistics, and customs sectors for an evening of networking, collaboration, and celebration.

A major highlight of the evening was the launch of a new digital app aimed at streamlining trade processes and boosting efficiency across the supply chain. Designed to support seamless communication and operational transparency, the app reflects BCBA's commitment to driving innovation and growth within the trade and logistics ecosystem. The event served as a valuable platform for industry professionals to exchange ideas, discuss trends, and strengthen partnerships.





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CATHAY CARGO

MOVE BEYOND

Hike in engineering exports in August 2025

Trade: Export

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Million USD				% Change	
		AUG'24	APR'24- AUG'24	AUG'25	APR'25- AUG'25	AUG'25	APR'25- AUG'25
1	Tea	88.94	355.91	107.19	420.71	20.52	18.21
2	Coffee	150.65	774.50	139.22	901.55	-7.59	16.40
3	Rice	787.65	4426.72	881.67	4710.00	11.94	6.40
4	Other cereals	12.16	85.14	23.07	103.96	89.69	22.11
5	Tobacco	206.03	779.76	157.19	819.84	-23.71	5.14
6	Spices	334.70	1758.18	336.45	1835.02	0.52	4.37
7	Cashew	29.29	117.90	27.01	110.44	-7.77	-6.32
8	Oil meals	111.87	577.22	98.91	474.58	-11.59	-17.78
9	Oil seeds	100.05	555.30	103.67	560.69	3.62	0.97
10	Fruits & vegetables	292.90	1418.11	309.79	1558.82	5.77	9.92
11	Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items	267.46	1279.79	286.99	1369.58	7.30	7.02
12	Marine products	552.27	2753.12	595.74	3193.73	7.87	16.00
13	Meat, dairy & poultry products	429.88	1809.82	505.92	2176.97	17.69	20.29
14	Iron ore	100.51	995.76	66.98	571.85	-33.36	-42.57
15	Mica, coal & other ores, minerals, including processed minerals	365.55	1946.75	455.38	2270.66	24.57	16.64
16	Leather & leather products	408.04	1877.00	408.60	1944.15	0.14	3.58
17	Ceramic products & glassware	318.00	1658.62	354.26	1741.39	11.40	4.99
18	Gems & jewellery	2000.39	11119.84	2311.92	11365.68	15.57	2.21
19	Drugs & pharmaceuticals	2347.26	11893.52	2510.13	12756.77	6.94	7.26
20	Organic & inorganic chemicals	2329.16	11790.85	2416.75	11881.44	3.76	0.77
21	Engineering goods	9437.14	46516.78	9900.90	49236.70	4.91	5.85
22	Electronic goods	2323.76	13570.54	2926.34	19091.41	25.93	40.68
23	Cotton yarn/fabs./made-ups, handloom products etc.	1008.61	4896.10	985.18	4865.83	-2.32	-0.62
24	Man-made yarn/fabs./made-ups e tc.	419.05	1990.31	406.15	1994.99	-3.08	0.24
25	RMG of all textiles	1268.17	6395.99	1234.57	6765.72	-2.65	5.78
26	Jute mfg, including floor covering	37.26	146.18	34.15	160.28	-8.34	9.64
27	Carpet	128.48	614.98	119.21	623.08	-7.22	1.32
28	Handicrafts, excl. handmade carpet	152.19	699.17	152.13	704.01	-0.04	0.69
29	Petroleum products	4204.86	32346.20	4479.67	26058.81	6.54	-19.44
30	Plastic & linoleum	763.45	3630.92	730.83	3671.37	-4.27	1.11
	Sub-Total	30975.77	168780.95	33065.97	173940.04	6.75	3.06
	GRAND TOTAL	32890.09	179598.72	35104.18	184131.81	6.73	2.52

Note 1: Exports include Re-Exports.

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

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

Petroleum imports grew in August 2025

Trade: Import

Sl. No.	Commodities	Values in Million USD				% Change	
		AUG'24	APR'24- AUG'24	AUG'25	APR'25- AUG'25	AUG'25	APR'25- AUG'25
1	Cotton raw & waste	104.89	343.18	127.25	510.48	21.33	48.75
2	Vegetable oil	1575.80	7671.26	2026.69	8249.91	28.61	7.54
3	Pulses	320.30	1762.17	114.87	841.11	-64.14	-52.27
4	Fruits & vegetables	215.90	1154.88	265.00	1342.85	22.75	16.28
5	Pulp and waste paper	178.79	823.88	172.99	849.77	-3.25	3.14
6	Textile yarn fabric, made-up articles	228.71	994.21	227.35	1080.45	-0.60	8.67
7	Fertilisers, crude & manufactured	533.90	3498.15	1659.65	5352.60	210.85	53.01
8	Sulphur & unroasted iron pyrites	10.36	64.38	27.45	265.38	164.91	312.24
9	Metaliferrous ores & other minerals	1079.82	4355.79	1093.05	5334.26	1.23	22.46
10	Coal, coke & briquettes, etc.	2794.23	15112.63	2062.09	12172.53	-26.20	-19.45
11	Petroleum, crude & products	12126.78	78145.80	13265.42	78091.00	9.39	-0.07
12	Wood & wood products	648.99	2771.67	555.14	2768.81	-14.46	-0.10
13	Leather & leather products	123.01	494.92	89.74	389.11	-27.04	-21.38
14	Organic & inorganic chemicals	2628.75	12373.96	2492.21	12263.96	-5.19	-0.89
15	Dyeing/tanning/colouring materials	414.40	1833.57	303.19	1725.28	-26.84	-5.91
16	Artificial resins, plastic materials, etc.	2235.42	9779.65	2018.81	9854.78	-9.69	0.77
17	Chemical material & products	1041.93	4852.50	1003.11	8840.27	-3.73	82.18
18	Newsprint	48.41	211.48	31.33	139.39	-35.28	-34.09
19	Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones	1316.10	8048.45	1414.23	7867.52	7.46	-2.25
20	Iron & steel	2268.79	9276.82	2019.72	9275.17	-10.98	-0.02
21	Non-ferrous metals	2358.62	10755.33	2476.66	11753.26	5.00	9.28
22	Machine tools	494.64	2255.58	527.04	2788.83	6.55	23.64
23	Machinery, electrical & non-electrical	4997.47	21482.41	5154.42	24622.94	3.14	14.62
24	Transport equipment	3111.10	14353.60	2285.36	12947.29	-26.54	-9.80
25	Project goods	245.30	499.93	22.98	434.69	-90.63	-13.05
26	Professional instrument, optical goods, among others	709.61	3391.49	785.04	3817.69	10.63	12.57
27	Electronic goods	8978.76	39574.94	9730.73	46328.61	8.37	17.07
28	Medicinal & pharmaceutical products	770.95	3676.87	780.70	3875.20	1.26	5.39
29	Gold	12553.49	24391.73	5439.26	16899.03	-56.67	-30.72
30	Silver	1120.00	1516.32	451.66	1912.25	-59.67	26.11
	Sub-Total	65235.21	285467.54	58623.14	292594.41	-10.14	2.50
	GRAND TOTAL	68527.48	300115.91	61591.42	306524.98	-10.12	2.14

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

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

Boosting connectivity through 'double-dipping' in air cargo

To position India as a logistics and air cargo hub driving sustained industry growth, it is essential to strengthen customs through a digital single window system and expand ECCS across airports. These initiatives are important for enabling faster, paperless operations while addressing infrastructure gaps.



CT Bureau

PPP VITAL TO BUILD NEXT-GEN INFRA

Government-backed pack-houses, irradiation facilities, and plant quarantine units near airports could help increasing exports. Uniform GST rates for multimodal cargo for sustainable, and integrated transport would help in promoting green logistics. Investment in air and rail corridors will improve hinterland and international connectivity through 'double-dipping' for freighters — a freighter serving two or more points in a single flight, allowing it to pick up and drop off cargo at multiple domestic cities within one international journey is known as 'double dipping' in air cargo.

Streamlining customs via a digital single window and expanding Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS) across airports will enable faster, paperless processing. These reforms help redress infrastruc-



Santhosh Kumar
Product Manager, Logistics Operating System, Bosch Mobility Platform and Solutions

ture gaps, improve operational efficiency, and support India's ambition to become a global air cargo leader.

BOTTLENECKS IN LOGISTICS

There are certain challenges before its full potential could be unlocked.

- City-level logistics planning needs better alignment with national port infrastructure strate-

While digitalisation is advancing, system integration remains fragmented. This hinders real-time tracking & visibility

gies to ensure integrated development. Last-mile connectivity between ports, airports, and inland hubs, — especially in tier II and III cities — remains weak due to limited cold-chain and terminal infrastructure

- While digitalisation is advancing, system integration across transport remains fragmented, this hinders real-time tracking and end-to-end visibility
- Expanding dedicated freight corridors can enhance reliability and reduce transit times. Varying

GST rates across transport modes create procedural delays and hinder smooth cargo flow movement

Overcoming these challenges require sustained investment, digital integration, and coordinated PPPs. With these efforts, the country can create a logistics ecosystem that is efficient, resilient, and globally competitive.



Air cargo on the cusp of a golden age

Air cargo may represent one per cent of global freight volume, but its economic impact far exceeds its size. As e-commerce, global trade, and evolving supply chains reshape the world economy, air cargo is emerging as a critical driver of growth, connectivity, and opportunity says **Vineet Malhotra, Co-Founder & Director, Kale Logistics Solutions.**

Air cargo has long been a pillar of global trade. Representing one per cent of total freight volume, the sector generates six times its share in value for the world economy. This disproportionate impact underscores the industry's importance at a time when trade flows, supply chains, and geopolitical dynamics are undergoing seismic shifts.

The global economy continues to display resilience despite challenges ranging from post-pandemic recovery to political instability. In 2024, global tourism by air was valued at US\$ 1.4 trillion, yet cargo remains the true value multiplier. It has played an essential role in lifting more than a billion people out of poverty over the past three decades, thanks to its contribution to trade-driven growth. However, the trading environment has become



Vineet Malhotra
Co-Founder & Director
Kale Logistics Solutions

number of disputes highlights the fragility of the system, with the US, the EU, and China at the heart of ongoing tensions.

IMF projects have grown across all major economies in 2025, particularly India, which is emerging as the fastest-growing region. Latin America and parts of Europe are showing signs of recovery, creating

Air cargo is evolving to meet demands of a new consumer economy. E-commerce has become the defining driver of growth, accelerated by the pandemic and reinforced by shifting consumer behaviours. From fast-fashion pioneers, such as Inditex to digital-native brands, such as Shein, the pace of supply chain cycles has condensed, with air cargo enabling same-season or even same-week product turnover on a global scale.

Industries, such as fresh flowers in Africa or Beaujolais Nouveau wine in Europe depend heavily on air logistics to bring products to global markets within days, supporting communities and industries.

The sector faces pressing challenges, particularly sustainability. Environmental pressures demand solutions

Looking ahead, diversification rather than consolidation or chaos may define the next chapter. With China +1 strategies giving way to 'US+1' approaches, global supply chains are becoming more distributed. This diversification creates complexity and opportunity, positioning

“The sector faces sustainability challenges. Environmental pressures demand solutions that balance efficiency with responsibility.”

air cargo at the centre of an interconnected trade ecosystem. Despite geopolitical uncertainties, rising border complexities and continued disruption in conflict zones, consumer demand, and e-commerce expansion remain robust. With Southeast Asia adding 100 million annually to the consumption class — equivalent to the populations of Germany, the UK, and France combined — the appetite for goods and services will only grow.

Air cargo, therefore, stands not at a crossroads of decline, but at the threshold of a potential golden age. Growth may not match the surging rates of the late 20th century, but the opportunities ahead remain significant. The industry's ability to adapt, innovate, and facilitate global trade will ensure it continues to deliver outsized value in shaping the future of world economy.



complex. The rise of protectionist policies, particularly the tariffs and executive orders, has created unpredictability. Traditional mechanisms such as the WTO struggle to keep pace when trade is leveraged for political ends. The rising

a backdrop for global trade. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, encompassing 15 Asia-Pacific nations, has become the world's largest free trade bloc, unlocking new efficiencies and growth potential.

that balance efficiency with responsibility. Yet it is important to recognise that the industry's value extends beyond transporting goods — it sustains livelihoods, supports small-scale producers, and drives economic inclusivity.



AISATS awarded DGCA Safety Clearance Certification

AISATS has received Safety Clearance Certificate by DGCA. Under these newly established safety regulations, the Quality Management, Risk and Compliance, and Safety teams at AISATS have developed a comprehensive suite of operations and training manuals, which were highly commended by DGCA officials.



CT Bureau

Air India SATS Airport Services (AISATS) has become the first ground handling company in India to be awarded the newly mandated Safety Clearance by

This milestone follows months of documentation review and operational inspections conducted by DGCA across AISATS-managed airports.

the The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). With this regulation, India becomes the second country globally to formally regulate handling services. This achievement positions AISATS as a pioneer in aviation safety and opera-



tional excellence, and underscores India's emergence as a INTERNATIONAL leader in aviation standards.

AISATS has become the first and only ground handler in the country to obtain the Safety Clearance Certificate No. GHSP/001, issued by DGCA, under these new safety regulations. This milestone follows months of documentation review and operational inspections conducted by DGCA across all AISATS-managed airports.

"We are honoured to be the first ground handler in the country to secure DGCA's Safety Clearance. Safety and quality have always been the cornerstone of AISATS' operations. This recognition reflects our culture of accountability, continuous training, and operational excellence," said Ramanathan Rajamani, CEO, AISATS.

DGCA introduced this mandate in line with recommendations from the International Civil Aviation Or-

ganisation, requiring handlers to demonstrate Safety Management Systems (SMS), risk controls, staff training programmes, and infrastructure readiness. DGCA introduced mandatory safety clearance requirements for ground handling service providers in response to increasing air traffic and the need for standardised safety protocols.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The DGCA introduced this mandate in line with ICAO recommendations.
- It requires handlers to demonstrate SMS risk controls, staff training, and infra readiness.
- This mandate was in response to increasing air traffic and the need for standardised safety protocols.

Enabling Trade

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Air cargo agents under strain amidst mounting challenges

Indian IATA agents form the backbone of the air cargo ecosystem, serving as the bridge between airlines, airports, customs, exporters, and importers. They enable seamless global trade by providing booking, documentation, customs clearance, payments, and end-to-end logistics solutions.

Indian IATA agents act as a link between supply and demand. Numbering 1,000 across India, most of these agents are SMEs. Agents provide crucial logistics solutions, from booking and scheduling to customs clearance and door-to-door deliveries, for thousands of Indian businesses. We also serve as financial intermediaries, managing cargo payments, airport handling fees, and customs duties. By acting as interface with airlines, airports, and customs, we enable Indian exporters and importers — a majority of whom are MSMEs — to access global markets. The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI) has been representing the IATA agents in India since 1970.

BURDEN OF BANK GUARANTEES

The IATA agents are subject to IATA's financial protocols, including annual reviews and bank guarantees, whenever necessary. Many airlines now demand separate bank guarantees simply for holding air waybills and securing cargo space. This practice places



a financial burden on IATA agents, especially the 80 per cent who are SMEs. It is an arbitrary and avoidable cost that is passed on to the consumers, making Indian goods less competitive globally. This is unjust given that India is one of the world's creditworthy cargo markets, with a recovery rate of 99 per cent.

GST'S IMPACT ON AIR CARGO

The GST reforms for air cargo harm working capital. Un-

Many airlines demand separate bank guarantees for holding air waybills & securing cargo space. This adds financial burden

like ocean freight, which has a 5 per cent GST, air cargo is subject to an 18 per cent GST. While this is a zero-rated, revenue-neutral tax on paper, it creates an 'inverted duty structure'. Our profit margins are far less than the 18 per cent GST rate.

This creates a cash flow mismatch. Airlines bill us for freight with GST, requiring payment within 30–45 days, while we often receive payment from shippers in 60 days or later than that. This billing and collection delay, combined with a monthly GST outflow, strains our finances. Agents are unable to offset their GST credits and face year-long

delays in receiving manual refunds, which chokes their working capital. These two policies have dampened the growth and survival of Indian IATA agents. The added costs from interest on bank guarantees and blocked working capital from GST refunds force many established players to exit the trade. The industry's well-being is vital for India's economic development and national security.



Dinesh K Krishnan
Honorary Treasurer, The Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI)

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





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Telangana govt pushes for innovation at CCUB 2025

Industry leaders gathered at Cold Chain Unbroken 2025 in Hyderabad, to discuss innovations and challenges in cold chain logistics. Themes included enhancing sustainability and improving resilience to fortify supply chains and reduce food waste. A CoE and MMLP would be set up for cold chain management in the state.



CT Bureau

The Cold Chain Unbroken (CCUB) Summit 2025, which recently concluded in Hyderabad, brought together cargo industry stakeholders, cold chain

The event served as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation in the sector as the firms continue to navigate the complexities of global supply chains

service providers, innovators, and industry experts from across the globe for an exploration of the future of temperature-controlled logistics. Hosted over two insightful days, the event served as a platform for dialogue, col-



laboration, and innovation in the cold chain sector as the industries continue to navigate complexities of global supply chains, evolving regulatory landscapes, and rising sustainability demands.

The summit attracted participants from a diverse range of sectors, including pharmaceuticals, cold chain sec-

tor, packaging, food & beverage, biotechnology, air cargo, and logistics.

Multiple panel discussions, workshops, and exhibitions were also held at the event. The Summit also highlighted the vital role cold chain infrastructure which ensures the safe and efficient transport of

temperature-sensitive goods across borders.

Nikhil Chakravarthi J, Commissioner/Director, Industries, Govt of Telangana, graced the occasion as Chief Guest, while Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GMR Hyderabad International Airport, was the Guest of Honour. The latter highlighted the sector's role

in ensuring food and pharmaceutical safety.

The event also marked a milestone following the signing of an agreement between Cold Chain Unbroken Services and Pharmacom Italy, while another was signed with NABCCM. The objective is to drive innovation, enhance infra, and elevate service standards across the cold chain industry. Through these alliances, the organisations will work together to deploy advanced cold chain technologies, streamline logistics solutions, and support knowledge ex-

Through these alliances, the firms will work together to deploy advanced cold chain tech, streamline logistics solutions, and support knowledge exchange

change across global markets. The collaborations underscore a commitment to build a resilient, efficient, and sustainable cold chain ecosystem, critical for sectors such as pharma, healthcare, and food logistics.

The two-day summit focused on supply chain resilience, how cold chain systems can adapt to disruptions caused by climate change, geopolitical instability, and unforeseen global events. From digital transformation and automation to the integration of Internet of Things, blockchain, and Artificial Intelligence — the summit highlighted an array of innovations aimed at improving visibility, traceability, and energy efficiency across the cold chain.

The sessions of the event explored strategies for decarbonisation and sustainable practices. Industry leaders emphasised the importance of reducing environmental impact without compromising product integrity. In addition to thought-provoking keynotes and technical sessions, the summit fostered valuable networking opportunities, enabling meaningful



partnerships and knowledge exchange. Stakeholders from the public and private sectors engaged in constructive dialogue, laying the groundwork for future collaborations and investment in cold chain infrastructure, particularly in underserved regions.

The summit concluded on an optimistic note, with participants reaffirming their commitment to building smarter, sustainable, and more resilient cold chain systems. As global demand for temperature-sensitive logistics continues to grow, the insights and innovations shared during the event will undoubtedly shape the industry's path forward. The success of the Summit reflects

the collective momentum and urgency driving advancements in cold chain and sets a foundation for continued progress and innovation in the years to come.

The panel discussions focused on building an air cargo cold chain for the new global south amid shifting geopolitics, Airports as cold chain anchors: 'Creating world-class ecosystems for perishables & pharma, cold chain meets climate: Decarbonising logistics for a sustainable tomorrow,' 'From paradoxes to primitives: Building India's next-gen air cargo ecosystem,' Seeing the unseen: Real-time visibility and tech-driven trust in cold chain and 'Building the

backbone: Cold chain warehousing, packhouses & integrated storage networks, and leveraging transshipment hubs for faster, fresher deliveries, among others.

HIGHLIGHTS

- As global demand for temperature-sensitive logistics continues to grow, the insights shared during the event will undoubtedly shape the industry's path forward.
- Stakeholders engaged in constructive dialogue, laying the groundwork for future collaborations.

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DIAL's Samvaya 3.0 brings stakeholders together

Delhi International Airport Limited, in collaboration with GMR Airports and Delhi Cargo Service Centre hosted the third edition of its flagship annual stakeholder event, 'Samvaya 3.0'. It brought together leaders, partners, and associations to reaffirm a shared vision of building a future-ready logistics hub.

Highlights included recognition of industry bodies such as ACAAI and DACAAI, BAR, NEFA, ACFI, and DCBA, along with discussions on innovation, sustainability, and digitisation. 'Samvaya 3.0' underscored the power of collaboration and renewed India's commitment to positioning itself as a leading cargo and logistics hub.



Next gen logistics fuelling India's growth roadmap

India's logistics sector is breaking traditional bottlenecks and becoming smarter, faster, and more inclusive by using cutting-edge technology, transformative infra, and supportive policy measures. This evolution is reducing costs, boosting efficiency, and creating opportunities for medium and smaller players.



Of late, logistics is embracing AI, ML, IoT, and blockchain, which enable real-time tracking, predictive analytics, and seamless coordination across the supply chains. Digital freight monitoring platforms, cloud-based logistics management solutions are optimising fleet utilisation, warehouse control, and last-mile delivery, thereby, rapidly reducing inefficiencies.

Introduction of Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) under the PMGS exemplifies this shift. ULIP offers a centralised digital space for stakeholders to include freight operators, transporters, and warehouses to utilise real-time cargo data, bringing transparency and speedier movements. Blockchain applications are increasingly being adopted to enhance security, streamline documentation, and reduce delays in freight clearances, improving trust within India and abroad.

India's multimodal logistics infra is undergoing a

revolution. The ongoing development of DFCs such as the Eastern, Western, and the proposed North-South and East-

The govt seeks to promote MSMEs by facilitating easy credit, digital tools, and integration, through platforms like ONDC

West Corridors, facilitates faster freight movement by rail — a cheaper and more sustainable mode of transportation.

Complementing the DFCs are the MMLPs, which consolidate rail, road, air, and inland waterways-based transport modes into integrated hubs. These hubs streamline cargo transfers, minimise times, and reduce traffic congestion on highways. Ports, highways and inland waterways contribute towards reducing delivery timelines under PMGS.

Hyperlocal warehousing and transshipment hubs support rising e-commerce demands and ensure fast last-mile delivery to consumers. Together, these infrastructure improvements account for shortened transit times and reduced logistics costs, aiming to lower the sector's drag on India's GDP from between 13 and 14 per cent to under 8 per cent by 2030.

A feature of India's ongoing logistics transformation is its emphasis on inclusivity. The government seeks to promote MSMEs by facilitating easier credit, digital onboarding, and marketplace integration, through platforms like ONDC. This democratises access to the formal logistics economy, allowing smaller transport operators and warehouse providers to flourish alongside larger players.

Skill development programs such as Skill India and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana are contributing towards training logistics profes-

sionals on digital tools, safety standards, and operational best practices, creating a more competent workforce ready to embrace advanced technologies in time with global best practices.

Amidst growing environmental concerns, green logistics is emerging as a fundamental pillar. Adoption of EVs, optimisation of routes through AI to cut fuel usage, and introduction of renewable energy in warehouses help reduce the carbon footprint. The NLP encourages use of rail and waterways because they are lower-emission options. Long-standing choke points and bottlenecks in the logistics network are being removed through improved infrastructure, inclusive policies, and technological infusion. The same has led to shortened delivery periods, reduced transit losses, lowered costs, and vibrant logistics ecosystem providing broader and fairer opportunities particularly for smaller operators.



Shamsheer Singh Ahlawat
Advisor
NLDL

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

Innovation, growth strategies in focus @Central Asia Air Cargo Summit

Tashkent came alive as the Central Asia Air Cargo Summit's second edition brought together over 350 industry leaders from around the world. Airlines, cargo operators, airports, tech firms, and investors converged to share insights, explore innovations, and build partnerships shaping the future of global air cargo.



Ritika Arora Bhola

Tashkent recently played host to the second edition of the Central Asia Air Cargo Summit. The two-day gathering altered the city into a vibrant hub for dialogue, innovation, and strategic collaboration, bringing together 350 participants from across the globe, including airlines, cargo operators, airport authorities, freight forwarders, regulators, technology providers, and investors.

The programme featured five in-depth sessions, a startup showcase, an exhibition zone, and a guided tour of UzCargo's state-of-the-art cargo terminal, Uzbekistan's newest logistics facility. Discussions spanned global air cargo trends, digital innova-



tions, supply chain resilience, infrastructure development, and startup-led solutions, with a spotlight on tools and strategies to drive efficiency in the sector. The summit opened with a focus on liberalising air transport in Central Asia,

a region witnessing sustained double-digit growth. Uzbekistan was highlighted as one of Asia's fastest-growing aviation markets, driven by robust economic expansion, infrastructure investments, and the rise of private airlines.

Keynote addresses were delivered by leading voices shaping the global cargo ecosystem. Rizwan Siddiqui (IATA) emphasised Central Asia's pivotal role in the worldwide air cargo network, while Thomas Kow-



itzki (DHL Global Forwarding) highlighted supply chain resilience as the cornerstone

of connectivity. Aida Issayeva (FedEx) shared perspectives on building resilient sup-

ply chains amid disruptions, and Hamdi Osman (SolitAir Holding) underlined Dubai's strategic location in global trade.

Other notable speakers included Vikram Vohra (Saudia Cargo) on scaling for growth in Asia-Pacific, Parvinder Singh (Hans Infomatic) on digitally connected airports and smart terminal management, Vitaly Andreev (My Freighter) on infrastructure and operational efficiency, and Ilya Kuznetsov (Cargoport International) on the rise of digital cargo hubs.

With a dynamic mix of discussions, showcases, and networking, the summit positioned Tashkent as a rising hub for global air cargo dialogue and innovation. Beyond sessions and showcases, the summit provided ample networking opportunities, enabling industry leaders and participants to connect, exchange ideas, and

explore collaborations that will shape the future of global air cargo. With its blend of knowledge-sharing, innovation, and partnership-building, the event brought Tashkent as a hub in cargo industry.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ The summit positioned Tashkent as a rising hub for global air cargo dialogue, innovation, and strategic collaboration
- ➔ Central Asia's aviation markets are seeing sustained double-digit growth, with Uzbekistan emerging as one of the region's fastest-growing sectors
- ➔ From digital innovations to resilient supply chains, the summit spotlighted strategies shaping the future of global air cargo

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Cargo Flash, EgyptAir Cargo unite to implement ICMS

The nGen ICMS has the potential to transform air cargo operations by replacing fragmented legacy systems with a unified digital platform. By automating processes from booking to final delivery, it streamlines workflows, reduces errors, and enhances real-time visibility, making cargo operations future ready.



CT Bureau

Cargo Flash Infotech has partnered with EgyptAir Cargo, the dedicated airfreight subsidiary of Egypt's national carrier, to implement the advanced 'nGen' Integrated Cargo Management System (ICMS). This partnership represents a milestone in EgyptAir Cargo's digital transformation journey, aimed at modernising cargo operations and enhancing service delivery across its network.



Developed by Cargo Flash, the nGen ICMS is a comprehensive, cloud-based

solution designed to replace legacy systems with a unified digital platform. It automates

end-to-end cargo processes, including booking, documentation, warehousing, and final delivery, while providing real-time visibility, operational accuracy, and seamless integration across the cargo value chain.

Jasraj S Chug, Co-founder & Director, Cargo Flash Infotech, said, "Our collaboration with EgyptAir Cargo is an alignment of vision and capabilities, focused on driving digital excellence in the industry." 🦋

Om Logistics, GLA University to upskill logistics aspirants

Om Logistics has partnered with GLA University for upskilling of logistics aspirants through specialised training and academic collaboration. The initiative aims to bridge the industry-academia gap by equipping students with practical knowledge, modern supply chain insights, and hands-on exposure.



CT Bureau

In a landmark step toward bridging academics with real-world expertise, Om Logistics Supply Chain has recently signed a deal with GLA University. The collaboration is set to open new doors of opportunity for students aspiring to build careers in logistics and supply chain management (SCM).

As part of the agreement, above a 300-hour in-

tensive programme has been launched exclusively for MBA students. The course blends theoretical knowledge with hands-on exposure, equipping students with the right skills, and mindset to succeed in the logistics sector.

With this, Om Logistics Supply Chain becomes the first logistics company to introduce such an in-depth programme dedicated to building the next generation of leaders. Together, the company and university will



focus on preparing industry-ready professionals to meet

the evolving demands of the logistics ecosystem. 🦋

Honouring 75 years of innovation, progress & excellence

New Globe Logistik LLP (NGL) recently celebrated 75 years of delivering promises across land, sky, and sea. The celebration in Mumbai was a moment to honour the trust, collaboration, and relationships that have powered this journey. The event was a tribute to customers and partners who were part of the legacy.



Movements



BLUE DART EXPRESS India

Sagar Patil has been appointed as CFO, Blue Dart Express. His appointment was approved by the Board of Directors at the convened Board Meeting. He joined the Blue Dart family eight years ago, having served as the Corporate Controller, Head, Corporate Accounts, and Interim CFO.



QUICKSHIP GLOBAL EXPRESS India

Sachin Gupta has been elevated to Co-Founder & CTO at Quickship Global Express, India. He is spearheading the firm's development of its AI-powered logistics platform. His vision and ability make him a cornerstone of Quickship's mission to transform cross-border logistics.



IKEA India

Patrik Antoni has been named CEO by IKEA India. He will strengthen IKEA's leadership setup in India. Antoni will drive a unified approach across retail operations and functions to drive a One IKEA India strategy. His stint as Deputy CEO enabled him to navigate the market's opportunities and challenges. Antoni was part of the initial IKEA India retail team.



TRACKON India

Smartya Majumder has joined as VP, Sales, Trackon. Majumdar has a track record of scaling sales ops and high-performance teams. He has held leadership roles at TNT India, DHL Blue Dart, Samsung Electronics, and Vivo Mobile India, and most recently served as National Head, Channels and Sales, DTDC Express.



SOFTLINK GLOBAL India

Gary Gonzalez has joined Softlink Global as Associate Vice President - Business Development (North America). He started his career at Maersk building a strong foundation in global trade and supply chains. Over the past two decades, he has worked across the logistics and technology landscape, driving efficiency and innovation worldwide.



SWISSPORT North America

Ajay Barolia has been named EVP, Cargo, North America, Swissport. Since joining Swissport in June 2024 as SVP, North America, he has brought his vision and expertise for the firm. With three decades of expertise, Barolia is recognised for his mastery of cargo standards and his commitment to innovation.



TRUCKSUP India

Abhijay Ratan has been appointed as the new CMO at TrucksUp India. In his new role, he will steer TrucksUp's marketing vision and help position the firm as a leader in the technology-driven trucking ecosystem while enhancing stakeholder engagement in India's logistics ecosystem. Ratan has two decades of experience in sales & marketing and growth.



WESTJET CARGO UK

Sabir Ebrahim has joined as the Head, Cargo Operations, WestJet Cargo. In his new role, he will be responsible for making sure the operations run smoothly and the carrier complies with the safety and security requirements. Previously, he worked at Qatar Cargo in various roles. His goal for the first few months was to truly immerse in the operations.



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