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ACAAI PRESIDENT

Sunil Arora
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We need an UDAN for cargos: ACAAI President

The 2019 Convention will seek to examine the problems and establish steps to help focus on the present business environment of the country. **Sunil Arora**, President, ACAAI, tells **CARGOTALK** that the idea now is to sit and discuss issues with various industries and present a joint white paper every six months to the ministry on various issues.



Kalpna Lohumi



Sunil Arora
President
ACAAI

Having been elected as the President of Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI), what are the core issues that you will be addressing?

It is been a long journey of almost 16 years being at the managing committee of ACAAI and now the responsibility has been given to me to lead the associa-

tion. My key objective would be to bring together various associations under one platform. This is going to be a big challenge. There are quite a lot of issues plaguing the logistics industry and we are not only a vertical industry now. We have air, sea, surface transportation, warehouse management, IT attached to it. The idea is to sit and discuss issues and present a

joint white paper every six months to the ministry on various issues.

The idea is to meet associations like AMTOI, CII, etc. every quarter and make a compilation of our issues, get into brainstorming sessions and share our problems to the government along with the solutions to go forward.

The support from the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Commerce, as well as the PMO, for the last three to four years, has been very encouraging. The Ministry of Finance through their customs has become a true facilitator, rather than being



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Distribution Redefined



This year we have tried to modify the entire programme in such a way that it is not only focused on air freight, but also on other sectors



a regulator. We are looking forward to engaging with them more often in a concrete manner so that our white paper of industry issues becomes a common paper for everyone. Now we know that national logistics policy is on the way; the draft has already been released and we would like the policy to cover quite a good number of issues and together we will present that to the government. We will probably become more aggressive and predominant in expressing our grievances and requirements when we do it together.

Could you please explain the theme of the convention 'End to end logistics – the way forward'.

The theme signifies that logistics and supply chain industry today is from the first mile to the last mile. If

ACAAI goes ahead only with certain issues related to air freight, then other associations will represent their issue, but we need to understand that members in each association are not limited to any particular vertical. They handle shipment from pickup to delivery, they are into warehousing, road transport management, to name a few. We even need to add warehousing, distribution and road transport associations as our members, we also need to involve IT suppliers and providers because technology must also be included in all this.

This year we have tried to modify the entire programme in such a way that it is not only focused on air freight, but also on other sectors. For the first time we will be having a discussion on sea freight. We have been talking about IT, technology, e-commerce and skill development, but this time sea freight is going to take the lead.

What are the requirements of the air cargo industry presently?

Requirements could be of many types; firstly, we have been talking about infrastructure for the last few years, but now it is much more than that. All the greenfield airports, like Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru

have good infrastructure, but there are infrastructural challenges in Mumbai and despite that Mumbai is doing well.

Firstly, I would like to stress that Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata airports need certain major infrastructural enhancement for smooth air cargo flow. AAICLAS has done an excellent job in the past but it needs to do much more in the future; Kolkata and Chennai really require certain attention. Although the process is going smooth, but the infrastructural challenges remain.

Secondly, the focus has now shifted from metro cities to tier 2 cities. With UDAN and with cargo centres becoming an integral part of any airport establishment now, we have an opportunity to look at other airports like Jaipur, Pune, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Guwahati as well as few airports down south.

It's high time that we adopt technology. We have a lot of platforms in the industry and paperless is no longer a distant dream. We have already reduced the number of documents but system-to-system talk, and removal of manual interference in clearance of document, whether it is import and export, is the next step we need

Infrastructure need

■ **Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata airports need certain major infrastructural enhancement for smooth air cargo flow**

■ **With UDAN and with cargo centres becoming an integral part of any airport establishment now, we have an opportunity to look at other airports like Jaipur, Pune, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Guwahati as well as few airports down south**



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to work on. There should be no need for a person to go to the airport to clear the cargo. This environment will not only reduce transaction cost but also enhance the country's level in ease of doing business in the world ranking.

With eSANCHIT and SWIFT in place, we do not require a lot of paper to be sent to the airport, they are all scanned and uploaded where and when required to the customs. The no-face clearance trial has started in Bengaluru, and once that succeeds it will be replicated in other airports also. This will not only hasten the work; it will also reduce a lot of unwanted elements in the workings of the industry.

I won't say India is going through difficult times economically, but these are testing times. Air freight worldwide has gone down and it has affected us the most because we are one of the leading EXIM countries in the world. And, now with this trade imbalance between US and China, the focus has shifted to India and we may be the beneficiary in this. Manufacturing happening in and around major cities can bring lots of cargo movement not only by air, but also by sea and by land. GST and other factors have brought in a thrust and

acted as a catalyst to the growth of the economy. The world is looking at India and we have a bright future.

Competency centre for pharma, perishables, etc. near airports is the need of the hour. In other countries, every second warehouse at airports has a competency centre for live animals or perishables abroad. Here, we find these only at major airports like Delhi or Mumbai.

How will UDAN bring about a growth in the sector?

With UDAN, we have got a lead to talk to the ministry and government. UDAN is only for passengers, it specifies that airport strips have to be activated. At this point, we are emphasising that these strips should be made big enough so that wide body aircraft can land in the future. If you are developing an airport in tier-2 & 3 cities, a small or big cargo warehouse should be an integral part of the UDAN scheme. This will enhance the willingness of airlines and create demand. Now is the time when we need UDAN for cargo.

To support the boom in e-commerce we have to understand that there is demand, but we cannot cater to it as our road infrastructure is not that

robust to take care of the growing demand of the e-commerce sector.

Domestic movement of cargo also plays a big role as MoCA has also put a special emphasis on far East with dedicated air freight corridors. I would say that there are a lot of other places in India, such as, Puducherry, Tuticorin, UP and Maharashtra, where a lot of perishable commodities or handicrafts can move within the country and to main cities to be exported further. UDAN for cargo is required wherein it becomes the national thrust to take cargo to every city.

What is your idea about skill development?

Educated professionals are desperately required in our industry. We are basically focusing on manpower, which is shifting from one organisation to other, but we are not grooming people, even if we are grooming people, we are doing it at the base skill. Now that base skill has to get skilled further and into professionalism where they can be taken up by the companies.

There is a sea change on the logistics front. Now, logistics and supply chain management have become curriculum in major uni-

Airport facilities

■ Under UDAN scheme, airport strips have to be activated. We are emphasising that these strips should be made big enough so that wide body aircraft can land in the future

■ A small or big cargo warehouse near an airport will enhance the willingness of airlines and create demand

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versities and students have started opting for management courses in logistics. Since the bigger companies are merging and they want the youth to join, this is a ripple effect that has been created. You begin with education and you will gradually see that these people will move up the ladder and surely will contribute to the logistics industry and to their own success.

What is the present demand and supply situation in the Indian logistics industry?

There has been a serious demand and supply imbalance in the air cargo industry from the

Skill enhancement

- Educated professionals are desperately required in our industry
- We are grooming people at the base skill. Now, that base skill needs to get skilled further
- Logistics and supply chain management have become curriculum in major universities now and students have started opting for management courses in logistics

bringing more space. Hence, with increased passenger aircrafts there is more of capacity available than the demand in the market. Cargo is doing good but vis-à-vis the capacity available the demand and supply equilibrium gets disturbed.

We are very optimistic because the US-China tariff trade war has brought in a lot of business into India and special impetus has been given by the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Finance plus bilateral relationship between India and southern eastern countries have increased significantly. Most of the orders from the western world have come into Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Bangkok and India. This will balance out the demand-supply position in the country, and we have already seen the upsurge in cargo. ↗

past one year. This demand and supply difference that has happened of late is because of airlines adding more and more passenger capacity. With this, only belly space is coming in and freighters are not



Stop charging dual costs

The benefit of custom bonded trucking is not limited to cost. Despite its presence for so long, the industry is facing issues like dual charges for same cargo. **Dileepa B.M**, CEO – Bonded Trucking, Shreeji Translogistics, shares the solutions that can bring in efficiency.

The size of custom bonded trucking is very small but plays a vital role in the Indian logistics industry. 90 per cent of the airlines are dependent on bonded trucking in one or the other way in different stations, either for export or import movements.

CONSTRAINTS

The industry is almost 21 years old; custom bonded trucking started in 1998 in India but is still facing various restrictions to reach 100 per cent to the customers. The restrictions depend on customs permissions and even

“
Flexible bonded trucking rules can smoothen the processes and give benefits to airlines
”

from custodians. Custodians impose new rules, hike handling charges and

dual charges for the same cargo in a different name. Challenges lies in operation, high risk, penalty clauses, to name a few

NEED OF THE HOUR

We need flexibility in bonded trucking rules for smooth processes. Most importantly, custodians must stop charging dual costs for the same cargo. Government should consider bonded trucking operators also like an airline as we carry the transshipment cargo and give the benefits which airlines are enjoying at present.



Dileepa B.M
CEO – Bonded Trucking
Shreeji Translogistics
DDP Game Changer (India Cargo Awards 2018)

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



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Airport-based FTZ for greater efficiency

GMR Hyderabad Airport City offers India's first and only airport-based Free Trade Zone (FTZ). Aman Kapoor, CEO – Airports Land Development, GMR Group, talks about the benefits and significance of the world-class facility. He explains how logistics companies can build their warehouse at the FTZ to keep their commodities without impacting import duty.



Aman Kapoor
CEO – Airports Land Development
GMR Group

GMR Hyderabad Airport City is all set to be developed by GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) around Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA). Touted as India's largest airport city, it offers an integrated ecosystem covering commercial office space, retail, leisure and entertainment, hospitality, education, healthcare, aerospace, and logistics. The master plan of RGIA, which is a Greenfield project, is aimed at creating a world-class aerotropolis from the design stage itself.

GIFTZ

An airport-based FTZ enables customers to get a quick turnaround time and bring down the transportation cost of man and material movement due to its proximity to the airport and its cargo terminal, all within driving time of just 5-10 minutes. RGIA is also home to the GMR International Free Trade Zone (GIFTZ), which is India's first and only airport-based free trade zone. Currently, 20 acres of land parcel is earmarked within the multi-product SEZ of 250 acres for the FTZ.

SERVICE OFFERINGS AT GIFTZ

Warehousing: Logistics companies can build their warehouse at the FTZ to keep their commodities for both short and long term without impacting import duty.

Distribution: Companies can le-

verage the state-of-the-art infrastructure of FTZ, both for Indian and international distribution. It provides an opportunity for effective re-export of commodities with facilities of sorting, grading, kitting, and repackaging among others. It also imparts an opportunity to undertake value-added activities like reverse logistics apart from general cargo handling.

Trading: FTZ at the GMR Hyderabad airport city entails re-export, re-sale and re-invoice of goods without any restriction. The goods can also be traded in Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) by payment of customs duties as applicable at the time of sale.

Value addition: Packing and repacking without processing and labelling as per customer or marketing requirements can also be undertaken at the FTZ.

Assembling: Assembly of complete knock-down and semi knock-down

kits are also being permitted at the FTZ. Units within the FTZ are allowed to export, import and re-export products without the burden of taxes, duties and levies that a business would otherwise have been bound by. FTZ allows businesses to locate stock in close proximity to their Indian customers, reducing buffer stocks and improving turnaround time. This increases forward and reverse supply chain efficiencies.

BENEFITS OF AIRPORT-BASED GIFTZ AT RGIA

- Highly secure and safe zone for business operations as it lies within airport premises
- Close proximity to world-class cargo terminal infrastructure and services for logistics facilitation
- 24x7 customs operations for seamless clearances
- Goods can be stored for a longer period of time by deferring payment of duties, thus freeing up working capital. There is no interest levied on deferred duty.

“An airport-based FTZ enables customers to get a quick turnaround time and bring down the transportation cost of man and material movement”

GMR Aerospace & Industrial Park

- GMR has developed an Aerospace & Industrial Park as part of Airport City within the GMR Hyderabad International Airport campus at Hyderabad.
- This park focuses on areas like supply chain, manufacturing and sub-assemblies, MRO services, aviation and aerospace training, development and KPO, engineering unit, etc.
- It is the only facility in India to have land available with direct runway access to an operational international airport.



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Technology for viability

Shankar Iyer, Director - Cargo (India, Middle East & Africa), Swiss WorldCargo, shares how electronic, web-based technologies and digital communications help improve the transportation offering for businesses as well as customers. He also points out that successful digitisation requires a combination of technology, processes, and people.



Shankar Iyer
Director - Cargo India, Middle East & Africa
Swiss WorldCargo



CT Bureau

Digitisation allows us to continuously enhance our processes and push ahead in the logistics industry. Over the past years, we have remained committed to adopting electronic and web-based technologies as well as digital communications, which improve both ours and our customers' transportation offering.

Customers, nowadays, have different expectations and we are also seeing the emergence of new clients. Digital freight forwarding has now appeared



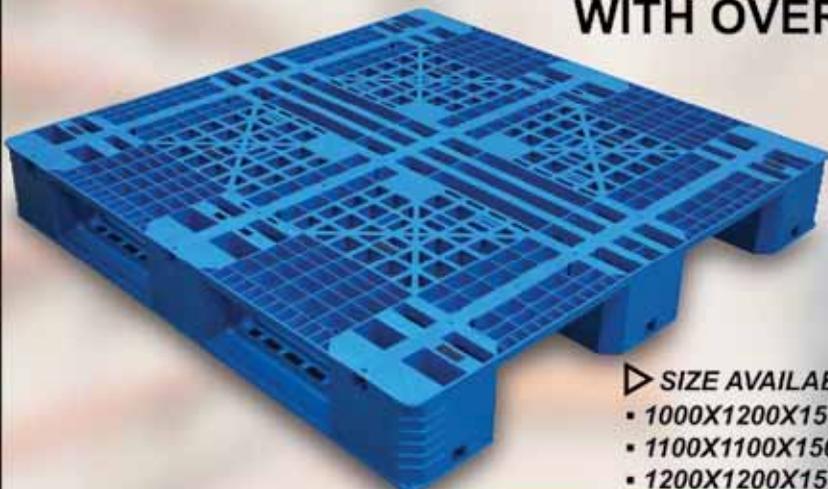
on the scene instead of traditional brick-and-mortar forwarders. Thus, it remains important to embrace innovation and collaborate with others to jointly move forward with business. We will also need to continue critically evaluating which digital tools we

can adopt to enhance our partnerships with customers worldwide. That said, at the end of the day, our focus can't be exclusively on technology; successful digitisation will require a combination of technology, processes, and people.



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Prerequisites

- All stakeholders must act responsibly towards customs compliances, allow greater transparency and build trust
- Customs programmes like Accredited Client Programme (ACP) and Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) have immensely helped to facilitate the growth of our international business



Kalpana Lohumi

As countries continue to move towards integrating their economies and removing trade barriers, there is a lot more ease in the regulatory process of importing and exporting. Customs regulations play a direct role in defining the regulatory framework and environment for cargo or express delivery services operations. Customs clearances used to

be complex but now our country has made significant progress in easing this process. **CARGOTALK** shares how customs processes driven by technology are coming into the forefront.

Every government exercises their sovereignty when it comes to controlling the customs. **Samir J Shah**, Partner, JBS Group of Companies,

informs, "Customs is the controlling authority across countries. Hence, for all international movement the importance of customs remain. They represent the respective governments and play a crucial role in the processes; facilitation; regulations and control."

Over 98 per cent of goods in global

Customs clearing is imperative in end-to-end logistics chain pertaining to international trade. Several cumbersome procedures have now been simplified with the use of technology. However, digitalisation is yet to modernise the entire border clearance process and is a strong move to automate customs procedures.



Today more than 2000 chambers around the world issue 15 million certificates of origin

trade are subject to customs control and its role is shifting from focusing on collection of duties and taxes on imported goods to be a trade facilitator in the logistics chain. Explaining these views, **Amar More**, Director, Kale Logistics Solutions, says, "Countries have undertaken several types of customs reform, including the use of online single window systems to streamline customs paperwork and improve transparency; the adoption

of 'trusted trader' programmes and risk assessment tools to speed customs clearance at border checkpoints and efforts at harmonising customs processing among regional trading partners. In a watershed moment for global trade, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force in February 2017. The TFA aims to speed up customs procedures, by making processes and fees more

transparent for companies, rooting out corruption and taking advantage of new technologies. They also play a very significant role in duty collection, customs control, trade statistics, anti-smuggling, border protection and Intellectual Property Protection (IPR)."

In addition to change in customs processes and duties, **Cyrus Katgara**, Partner, Jeena & Co, says, "Customs are performing the sovereign function and unlike all other stakeholders in the chain, they are not governed by the market pressures for efficiency. Simultaneously, they are responsible for safeguarding the revenue interests of the government on one hand and the forex regulations on the other. Apart from being a nodal agency for monitoring implementation of export promotion schemes and policy objectives of EXIM policy, customs must ensure that there is no violation of statutes of allied agencies like Wildlife, Drug Controller, FS-SAI, Archaeological Survey of India, to name a few."

The smooth flow of goods across borders requires high levels of compliance with the trade regulations says **Huned Gandhi**, Managing Director – India, Dachser. It involves dealing with customs as the first national entity to interface with goods arriving in the country and therefore plays an important role not only in ensuring the trade policy measures adopted by the government for export and import of goods is well taken care of, but also helps in making an informed decision as well as in managing risks related to cross-border trade regulations.

He tells how the customs plays the role of key facilitator in the entire process of the logistics chain. Non-compliance can act as a serious threat to the future of your business and can lead to serious financial penalties, loss of customs privileges,



Samir J Shah
Partner, JBS Group of Companies
DDP Game Changer
(India Cargo Awards 2017)

The manual processes have many items which are handled multiple times including verification, validation and authorisation. Technology will improve accuracy, speed and facilitation

Management mode

■ Customs authority, as a government administration, needs to build a new management mode and a set of operational mechanisms to cultivate and maintain the relationship with their business partners



Cyrus Katgara
Partner, Jeena & Co
Gallery of Legends (India Cargo Awards 2017)



Amar More
Director
Kale Logistics Solutions

“
Customs are responsible for safeguarding the revenue interests of the government on one hand and the forex regulations on the other
 ”

“
Customs authorities are required to ensure compliance with several allied acts in respect of import/export of goods
 ”

border delays, service level impacts, and reputational damages.

Customs clearing is the critical and most important factor behind the success of end-to-end logistics chain pertaining to international trade. **PS Atree**, President, Delhi Customs Brokers' Association, supporting the view says, "Customs brokers are the silent heroes for facilitating the international trade by clearing goods through customs barriers for

importers and exporters. The process involves the preparation of documents and/or electronic submissions, calculation and payment of taxes, duties and facilitating communication between government authorities and importers and exporters. Licensing of customs brokers is covered under the statutory provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 which involves stringent conditions including passing of written and oral examination for which the person must have vast experience and knowledge of customs laws and procedures and of other allied acts relating to clearance of import and export of goods. Therefore, such licensed customs brokers have the privilege to be associated with logistics industry without which movement of import and export of goods may not be smooth."

Jaideep Raha, Co-Chairman – Logistics Task Force, Eastern Region, Confederation of Indian Industry, says, "Without customs one cannot think of EXIM Logistics. They control the documentation regulations and they are the enforcement authority on behalf of the government to regulate the duty tariff and control the EXIM trade with checks and balance.

DIFFICULTIES

Though customs is making amendments on regular basis to make its regulations less complex but they are still existent. **Vaibhav Vohra**, Managing Director, Continental Carriers, tells how limited working hours increases the dwell time for customs officials. "There are lot of technical challenges in Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems. Many a times information on documents/data goes missing in reg-

istered data at customs. In case customs takes a wrong decision then the forwarder goes through a lengthy appeal process against the decisions which results in financial loss at various levels."

"EXIM movement has many stakeholders from custodians, carriers, EXIM companies to freight forwarders and each has a role to play and needs sometime for execution of their roles. However, the customs clearance to these processes is done collectively and the entire time taken is attributed to customs. Additionally, customs must regulate and enforce while meeting with the demands of the EXIM community of facilitation at utmost speed. Enforcement and regulating with speedy facilitation is the prime complexity," illuminates Shah.

Customs activities encompass strict adherence to all customs provisions. It entails customs clearance of goods based on commodity description; declarations specified in the documents issued by the exporter/ importer. Gandhi is of the opinion that the processes are mostly smooth, the complexities generally arise when there is a lack of understanding of the customs rules by the importer or exporter. Shah adds, "At times, a difference in interpretation of the rules, provisions and lack of precedence may cause additional time spent, review and penalties which instills some complexity in customs activities. Nowadays, the rapidly evolving trade blocks, treaties, embargoes also add to the dynamic nature of the customs tasks."

There are several factors that result in the customs complexities, but a lot

Trade processes

■ **Information and Technology Management (e-Ports, e-Customs, e-Administration), International Communication & Cooperation (bi & multilateral negotiations, customs cooperative programmes, capacity building) is required for efficient and compliant trade processes**





Big Challenges are Simple for Us



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President, Delhi Customs Brokers' Association
India Cargo Awards winner 2018



Huned Gandhi
Managing Director – India,
Dachser

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“
The processes are mostly smooth, the complexities generally arise when there is a lack of understanding of the customs rules by the importer or exporter
”

Bring in efficiency

- Improvement of transparency in law enforcement
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can change if customs could catch up with digitalisation. According to More, “Customs authorities are required to ensure compliance with several allied acts in respect of import/export of goods with assistance of other government regulatory agencies. He lists several reasons that bring complexities in customs like excessive government documentation requirements; lack of automation and insignificant use of information-technology; lack of transparency; unclear and unspecified import and export requirements; inadequate customs procedures; audit-based controls and risk-assessment techniques, and lack of cooperation and modernisation amongst customs and other government agencies, which



impedes efforts to deal effectively with increased trade flows.

Starting with the customs law of our country which is 57 years old, Raha adds, “We are in era of internet, blockchain, mobile app, RTGS/NEFT/IMPS which means speed with accuracy and transparency is the essence of the whole gamut of logistics. Unfortunately, customs is yet to catch up with this speed of digitalisation. Though lot has improved but we certainly need to attain more. The trend of physical files moving from one officer to his higher authority for sanctions or approvals in hard copies with signatures and seal is still going on. We need total over-hauling of the customs rules same as the Companies Act of 1956 was amended in 2013.”

END-TO-END DIGITALISATION IS CRUCIAL

The idea is to bring the bunch of papers at fingertips. There is a need to consider technology as an enabler and investment, not cost. “The manual processes have many items which are handled multiple times including verification, validation and authorisation. It is also estimated that the data in the initial shipping documents prepared by an exporter is replicated 65 times. The technology of Artificial Intelligence (AI) takes away the burden of verification, validation and authorisation. However, on a macro level, technology will improve accuracy, speed and facilitation without any doubt,” notes Shah.

Vohra opines, “Efficient customs operations are prerequisite for faster supply chain and undoubtedly technology speeds up the customs clearance process. For instance, forwarders with fully operational

electronic systems allows customs declarations to be submitted and processed online, saving time on customs clearance.”

Though customs clearing is apparently a complex mechanism in nature where multiple processes are involved, digital era is gradually revolutionising the traditional ways and procedures of cargo handling/operation business. Atree believes, “After Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), of late, implementation of Goods & Services Tax in July 2017 and introduction of e-Way Bill for transportation of import/export and other goods within India have eradicated many pain points to make cargo clearance and transportation less cumbersome as compared to carrying hard copies of all documents previously. It has also resulted in reduction of transaction cost of the industry as well as reduced transit time due to abolition of state level barriers of erstwhile sales tax department. Instead of physical presence or physically producing documents, electronic/online submission and interactions between customs officials and shippers would reduce hassles and interference. Besides latest know-how of Information Technology (IT), one should also keep abreast with the knowledge of customs law/procedures and other allied acts which are enacted by the government from time to time. We must agree that challenges and new opportunities are simultaneously emerging. So, the crucial task now will be reading between the lines of the changing situation and acting diligently.”

Citing the use of IT as imperative for customs processes, Gandhi points, “Customs authorities increasingly need to integrate their systems

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Jaideep Raha
Co-Chairman – Logistics Task Force, Eastern Region, Confederation of Indian Industry



Vaibhav Vohra
Managing Director, Continental Carriers
Face of the Future (India Cargo Awards 2017)

“
Without customs, one cannot think of EXIM logistics. They control the documentation regulations and they are the enforcement authority on behalf of the govt
”

“
Digitalisation with negligible human interactions at customs will create lesser opportunities for malpractices
”

and align their procedures with the evolving global logistics networks used by international trade stakeholders like airlines, shipping lines, airports and seaports to meet these challenges. The international trade bodies look forward to IT as an enabler for improving organisational and operational efficiency and effectiveness, as a result, many customs authorities worldwide have incorporated significant computerisation

and automation levels in their day-to-day working.”

According to Vohra, “Digitalisation in customs clearance procedures has the potential to revolutionise the cargo movement in the future. Seeing how digitalisation is helping various operating procedures in the industry, the need for a digital revolution in the customs clearance cannot be overlooked. It will reduce the coordination cost by sharing the information among various aspects of the logistics chain. Also, digitalisation with negligible human interactions at customs will create lesser opportunities for malpractices.”

Throwing light on how blockchain and Internet of Things (IoT) can act as a catalyst in simplifying and streamlining the myriad processes of customs clearance management, More, says, “Blockchain would favour revenue compliance and cooperation between tax and customs. It would also help to combat financial crimes at customs. Blockchain-based applications could be developed to help tackle emerging issues such as money laundering, terrorist financing and illicit financial flows with enriched red flag indicators. These are just a few of the applications of this technology in the arena of customs. Certificate of Origin (CoO) is another example of how Blockchain is used by trade and customs. IoT also supports trade facilitation, which is a core responsibility of customs, providing agencies with detailed location information, which helps to simplify and speed up inspections and automate border crossing of

instrumented cargo carriers (trucks, trains, ships).”

Katgara registers saying end-to-end digitalisation in case of exports should be a realistic target where all the data starting from invoice, Packing List (PL), CoO for any shipment travels paperless from exporters premises to forwarder/CHA, transporter (for generation of e-Way bills), custodian, customs, carrier, banks, DGFT. Also, all the data generated and exchanged between intermediary stakeholders and allied agencies also travels seamlessly without using paper at any stage. Similarly, customs documents like shipping bills and bill of entry should also be available electronically for validation by any of the stakeholders.

According to Raha, technology is the only answer and that too cloud base data recording with app base technology. End-to-end digitalisation is best thing that can happen to EXIM logistic industry and should be implemented on a war footing.

Vohra says, “Digitalisation in customs clearance procedures has the potential to change the way cargo movement can be organised and managed in the future. Seeing how digitalisation is helping various operating procedures in the industry, the need for a digital revolution in the customs clearance cannot be overlooked. It will reduce the coordination cost by sharing the information among various aspects of the logistics chain. Also, digitalisation with negligible human interactions at customs will create lesser opportunities for malpractices.”



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FREIGHT FORWARDERS

are here to stay

Cargo business has always been more complex than travel. Yet the freight forwarder's role doesn't go away just by using an online platform. Industry experts tell us why freight forwarders are irreplaceable.



Kalpana Lohumi

A freight forwarder is someone who assists an exporter or an importer in securing competitive freight rates while providing the most efficient routing for their cargoes and also preparing and processing the documents related to these shipments. Sounds easy, right? But what about managing the procurement and routing that comes with shipping goods in a way that makes it easy for importers and exporters of goods? Moreover, with the evolution of digitisation, the freight forwarding industry is going through a structural disruption in the last few years. **CARGOTALK** discusses how freight forwarders add value in the logistics chain and why aren't they threatened by automation and digitisation.

Commenting on the importance of freight forwarders in the logistics chain, **Vipin Vohra**, Chairman, Continental Carriers, says, "Freight forwarders are the nucleus of information in international logistics processes. They bring together various verticals of supply chain management in the best possible way to make speedy, cost-effective and hassle-free movement of goods."

Stressing on the specialisation a freight forwarder brings in handling the shipment, **Afzal Malbarwala**, Managing Director, Galaxy Freight,

says, "A freight forwarder is partner to shipper/consignee handling task of importing/exporting shipment on behalf of the customer as per his expectations. Freight forwarding is a specialised field requiring thorough knowledge of processes. A freight forwarder can provide all available options/resources and cost-effective solutions to suit requirements of the customer."

Adding to that **Ashish Asaf**, MD & CEO, SA Consultants & Forwarders, points, "Freight forwarders and the process of freight forwarding nowadays does not just culminate with mediating the requirements of the buyer and the seller, but also bring paramount value to the logistics and supply chain. The logistics service seekers look forward to freight forwarders for expert consultancy and advice for procuring competitive freight pricing, best carrier options, planning the most apt routings keeping cost efficiency and service levels in mind. The freight forwarders become the single source for a combination of services like forwarding, customs brokerage, transportation through multiple modes, warehousing. The 3PL to 5PL services offered by freight forwarders facilitates end customers with the recourse for completely outsourcing the supply chain workflow. This includes the sheer provision of sourcing, procurement of goods, quality control, capital flows and much more in addition to the conventional logistics services."

Explaining how freight forwarders have evolved over the years, **Yashpal Sharma**, Managing Director, Skyways Group, says, "Freight forwarders now offer a wide array of services apart from playing the traditional freight forwarder role of only facilitating transactions between shippers and carriers. Today, a forwarder provides end-to-end solutions, customs brokerage, first and last-mile opera-



Vipin Vohra
Chairman, Continental Carriers
Gallery of Legends (India Cargo Awards 2015)



Afzal Malbarwala
Managing Director, Galaxy Freight
Gallery of Legends (India Cargo Awards 2017)

“
Freight forwarders are not going to disappear. Going digital will certainly make logistics management more transparent, speedy and hassle-free

”

tions, storage, compliance, and full visibility of a customer's goods in the logistics chain."

Highlighting the reality of managing the procurement and routing that comes with shipping goods, **Sam Katgara**, Partner, Jeena & Co notes, "We as freight forwarders offer customisable solutions, optimise customer value, create understanding and transparency while taking the entire accountability of the logistics chain."

According to **AV Vijaykumar**, Chairman, Federation of Freight Forwarders Association of India (FFFAI), "Freight forwarders are the 'de facto' elements behind the hassle-

“
A freight forwarder can provide all available options/resources and cost-effective solutions to suit requirements of the customer

”





Sam Katgara
Partner, Jeena & Co
DDP Game Changer (India Cargo Awards 2015)



Ashish Asaf
MD & CEO, SA Consultants & Forwarders
Face of the Future (India Cargo Awards 2018)

“
The role of freight forwarders will never be at risk if they align themselves with ongoing trends like providing web-based platforms
”

“
Freight forwarders bring accountability and responsibility of the consignments for the airlines on one side and the buyers/ sellers on the other
”

free transportation of cargo and success of the international trade because of their expertise in end-to-end logistics services.”

DIGITISATION

Everything is going digital and digitisation is the most talked about develop-

ment nowadays. This gave everyone a thought about getting the freight forwarder role diminished from the logistics chain. But, is it even possible?

On this Vohra replies, “Freight forwarders are not going to disappear. Shippers will always need experienced and knowledgeable freight forwarders to manage the complexities of logistics. Going digital will certainly make logistics management more transparent, speedy and hassle-free.”

On the same lines, **Rahat Sachdeva**, Vice President, Rahat Continentals, explains, “Looking towards the future, with digitisation the freight forwarding technology will manage forwarding, product tracking, reshipment, quote sourcing, and other logistic challenges. Overall, it will continue to make forwarding processes more straightforward and take manual work out of the equation. Product tracking innovations will make it possible to watch products move in real-time, anticipate problems, and solve disruptions before they happen. Because of this, freight forwarders will turn their focus on providing unique services while keeping costs down. They’ll also have to emphasise technology innovation to differentiate themselves from the crowd.”

Explaining how freight forwarders offer convenience to the customers, Asaf adds, “While the freight

carriers are introducing online portals facilitating online checking of rates, booking and tracking of cargo, the freight forwarders have also started realising the need of the hour. Digitisation will lead to seamless execution of the otherwise time-consuming freight forwarding processes. The freight forwarders also need to stay abreast and embrace technology to stand out amid the intense competition and the changing work environment. However, the significance of a freight forwarder will not diminish as consumers will always look forward to outsourcing their freight forwarding service requisites than perform tasks on their own. Furthermore, there are elements of transparency, understanding of the customer needs and accountability associated with the freight forwarders.”

According to Sharma, “Forwarders, over the past decades, have adapted and evolved to meet every market need and threat. Technology has been a great enabler in many industries, and the forwarder has also embraced the same and made it an integral part of his process. Stakeholders in the logistics industry work on various platforms, and the forwarder has, in fact, created the link between them through their own IT solutions. I am confident that the role of forwarders will always be relevant in the value chain, though the same might change over the next few years.”

Online services are seemingly threatening the survival of many freight forwarders in the days to come, if





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AV Vijaykumar
Chairman, Federation of Freight Forwarders
Association of India (FFAI)



Rahat Sachdeva
Vice President, Rahat Continentals
Face of the Future (India Cargo Awards 2017)



Freight forwarders are the 'de facto' elements behind the hassle-free transportation of cargo and success of the international trade



Freight forwarders have to emphasise technology innovation to differentiate themselves from the crowd



they fail to cope up with the changing requirements. Vijaykumar believes that movement of cargo needs human touch. He adds, "In that as-

pect online facilities through online platforms may not be able to quench shippers' aspirations, unlike the case in point for passenger operation. Accordingly, there would be wide scope for freight forwarders in the new narratives though, especially for those who would be fortifying their services by embracing required and updated technologies."

According to Katgara continuous upgradation and improvement is the key. He continues, "The role of freight forwarders will never be at risk if they align themselves with ongoing trends like competing with disingenuous freight forwarders, providing web-based platforms as standard, offering highest standard of cyber security, leveraging public block chains to increase tracking etc."

CAN AIRLINES REPLACE FREIGHT FORWARDERS?

There have been reports of air cargo carriers planning to establish direct relationship with importers and exporters so they can by-pass third-party freight forwarding services for the movement of goods. The idea could be to reduce cost by removing a link from the logistics chain. On this, Malbarwala remarks, "Airlines may not be able to offer customised services to shippers. It has to be a service provider who can meet the

smallest expectations of the shipper or consignee. A freight forwarder supports shippers/importers by integrating various services like transportation, customs clearance, pre-shipment documentation, post shipment processes etc. He manages all these activities at competitive rates, which airlines might not be able to handle. Consolidation for shippers/importers can professionally be handled by freight forwarders from his transit warehouse."

"There are approximately 800 forwarders catering to 1,00,000 shippers across the country. For airlines to cover so many shippers individually would involve more cost and risk. IATA covered airlines are getting paid on time by freight forwarders through a proper network. Moreover, freight forwarding is a more service-oriented business, which airlines would not be able to offer to shippers directly as we bridge the end-to-end gap. Local transportation, custom clearance, documentation, following buyer SOP's all of this at origin and destination would not be possible without a freight forwarder. Hence, supply chain would be more complicated," adds Sachdeva.

Echoing similar views, Vijaykumar points, "Airlines' core competency is to carry cargo, not to get into end-to-end cumbersome logistics services

How to bring efficiency?

- Automate activities which allows operational management to focus on value adding services
- Make best use of digital platform and focus on developing IT infrastructure to meet expectations of demanding customers
- Technological advancement and digital integration of services
- Rapid transformation of the freight forwarders into complete logistics service providers
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Yashpal Sharma
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“
**Technology has been
 a great enabler in
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 the forwarder has also
 embraced the same and
 made it an integral part
 of his process**
 ”

and operations neither they can assume responsibility of compliances to be fulfilled by shippers.”

Sharing insights on how airlines work, Asaf expounds, “Airlines currently work on a Business-to-Business (B2B) model where they are directly associated with a limited number of freight forwarders only and not the sub-agents or direct customers. Freight forwarding involves many components of services wherein air carriage is only a minor part. Even with the introduction and development of automated services, airlines will face difficulty in meeting service requisites like freight pick-up from the direct exporter, sorting and packaging, inland transportation, warehousing, customs brokerage, document authorisations and approvals from competent authorities, door deliveries, to name a few. To carry out all the freight forwarding and logistics services without the freight forwarders will incur cost, manpower and other additional resources to both the airlines and end customers. Moreover, freight forwarders can generate more bulk business to the airlines and vice-versa secure competitive pricing to the shippers. The airlines get a more streamlined movement of cargo when it comes from the freight forwarders

and the shippers can ensure reliability of space confirmation and responsibility through the freight forwarders.”

According to Katgara, because of the vast difference in the product basket of airlines and freight forwarders, the question of duplication doesn't even exist. He adds, “The cost has always been proportional to the services which were required, agreed and taken by the shipper.”

Sharing his views on why it's not going to be easy for an airline to duplicate the range of services being provided by freight forwarders, Vohra notes, “Freight forwarders' relationships with various transporters, ground handlers, warehouses, customs, local logistics services provide end-to-end service, taking responsibility for delivering seamless movement of goods from door to door in the most cost-effective way. And removing freight forwarders from the logistics chain will not reduce cost for shippers as airlines will never be able to match the full range of services required in the transportation of goods.”

“Freight forwarders bring accountability and responsibility of the consignments for the airlines on

one side and the buyers/ sellers on the other. Moreover, the exporters/ importers get the benefit of credit facility from the freight forwarders. Freight forwarders can have access to even the remotest of hubs to procure cargo from the manufacturers/exporters and provision to connect multi-modal transportation. All in all, a single window solution is what one looks forward to that is expedited by the freight forwarders,” adds Asaf.

“The forwarder plays a crucial role in the value chain. He ensures the cargo is compliant to the various rules and regulations of different countries. While an airline can surely offer some of the services a forwarder does, it is very difficult for them to offer the full range of services they do. A forwarder aggregates demand and helps in reduction of pricing by taking into account a holistic view of market conditions and passes on this benefit to the customer. While a few large customers (that account for less than 15 per cent) may have market visibility and the scale to negotiate prices with the carrier, most of them will never be able to optimise pricing and will eventually end up increasing their cost of logistics,” adds Sharma. ↵



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India: A market with potential

Peeraboon Akkarawongwarit, Founder & Managing Director, Winner Inter Plas Co. Thailand, talks about the wide range of the company's product line and its aim to open a factory in India soon and begin production by 2020.



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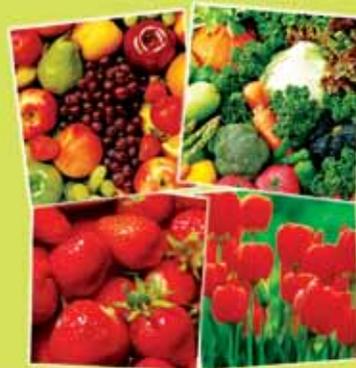
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Indian aviation industry in store for a bright future

Government and policy makers are now collaborating to achieve the overall vision of the aviation ministry. **Keku Gazder**, Chief Executive Officer, AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company, shares points, which if put in place, would contribute to the vision of reaching cargo volumes of 10 million metric tonne by 2027.

Air transport in India is undoubtedly in its stimulating period and hence it is important to have a clear mandate for the industry; its supply chain partners and the government and policy makers to all work in a collaborative manner towards achieving a common goal of bringing the benefits of the air transport industry to India.

The rating system for cargo terminals in-line with ASQ (Airport Service Quality) ratings at passenger terminal motivates operators to improve infrastructure and provide superior quality of services. Moreover, the development of regional and state cargo hubs act as a gateway to connect the domestic trade corridor to production hub with association of major international trading partners.

Coming up with an integrated digital platform across stakeholders and

Gateway to connect

- Development of regional and state cargo hubs act as a gateway to connect the domestic trade corridor to production hubs with association of major international trading partners

deploying the latest technology to reduce the cost and maximise efficiency; developing a mechanism to collect the important pain points experienced by trade and providing the remedies daily; using drone for effective time-sensitive deliveries; initiating and encouraging the production and export of perishable agro-products and pharmaceuticals are some of the benefits aviation can bring to India.

We need to create adequate freight carrying capacity within the Indian air network by creating new cargo terminals and expanding the existing ones, besides undertaking pro-active measures to identify tier-2 and tier-3 cities for setting up common user domestic cargo terminal (CUDCT). There is an urgent need for a clear cut and well-defined policy to initiate Air freight Stations (AFS) ecosystem to stimulate export-import trade. Promoting the concept of cargo villages and linking them with international airports

and free trade zones is an ideal way to boost air freight traffic. This will not only improve delivery but create more job opportunities to boost 'Make in India' initiative of government.

Keeping the right type of infrastructure not just in airports but both on the ground and in the air as well as procurement of automated material handling systems, reducing the manual intervention in the processes and maximising the skilled manpower are some of the key areas that can bring Indian air cargo industry closer to its global peers.

A robust and financially sound industry is critical to delivering the benefits that aviation can bring such as creating jobs, bringing families together, facilitating business, and supporting trade, investment and economic growth. The broader business and policy environment should not place unnecessary hurdles before the industry which inhibit its growth and development and in-turn reduce the level of benefits that aviation can deliver to the nation. 🇮🇳

“

Aviation industry can bring in new jobs, facilitate trade and economic growth for India

”



Keku Gazder
Chief Executive Officer, AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company (AAICLAS)
DDP Trailblazer (India Cargo Awards 2018)

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



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Going tech is imperative for trade partners

Technology is a competitive advantage for organisations that adopt and use it effectively. **Parvinder Singh**, Managing Director, Hans Infomatic, stresses on how the trade needs to be flexible in adopting new business models and how imperative it is to start treating technology as an enabler and an investment, rather than treating it as a cost factor.



CT Bureau



Parvinder Singh
Managing Director, Hans Infomatic
India Cargo Awards Winner 2018

What is your comment on logistics and supply chain industry adopting technology and making processes smooth?

Adoption of technology in logistics and supply chain has come a long way since the last decade but still the penetration is shallow and slow. The big logistics service providers (LSPs) are more agile in adoption of technology but the small and medium segment of LSPs are very slow and cut corners as they see the adoption of technology as a cost rather than an asset which is giving them competitive edge.

What technology solutions are you offering to the trade?

Our offering to the trade is a wide-spread bouquet of highly customisable applications for end-to-end logistics management for almost every trade partner in the supply chain.

How is it helping the logistics and supply chain industry, including freight forwarding;



customs broking, shipping and aviation?

We have over 2,000 customers starting from customs brokers, freight forwarders, carriers to cargo terminal operators. By connecting all trade partners at one common platform, we have simplified the data exchange between different trade partners having diverse systems. It's a kind of convergence of data on a common portal.

Despite getting the push from government, the freight forwarding community is not ready to digitise the process.

According to you what could be the reasons and why they should not fear about losing business?

They view the cost as an expense. Also, they have this mindset that technology will enable everyone to be at the same level and they will lose competitive edge by being transparent. It is known that technology is a great leveller and disruptor. We have seen how it has been disruptive in retail, transport, hospitality etc. Same is happening in logistics also and the trade partners need to be agile in adopting technology and new business models.

Technology is a great leveller and disruptor. The trade partners need to be agile in adopting technology and new business models

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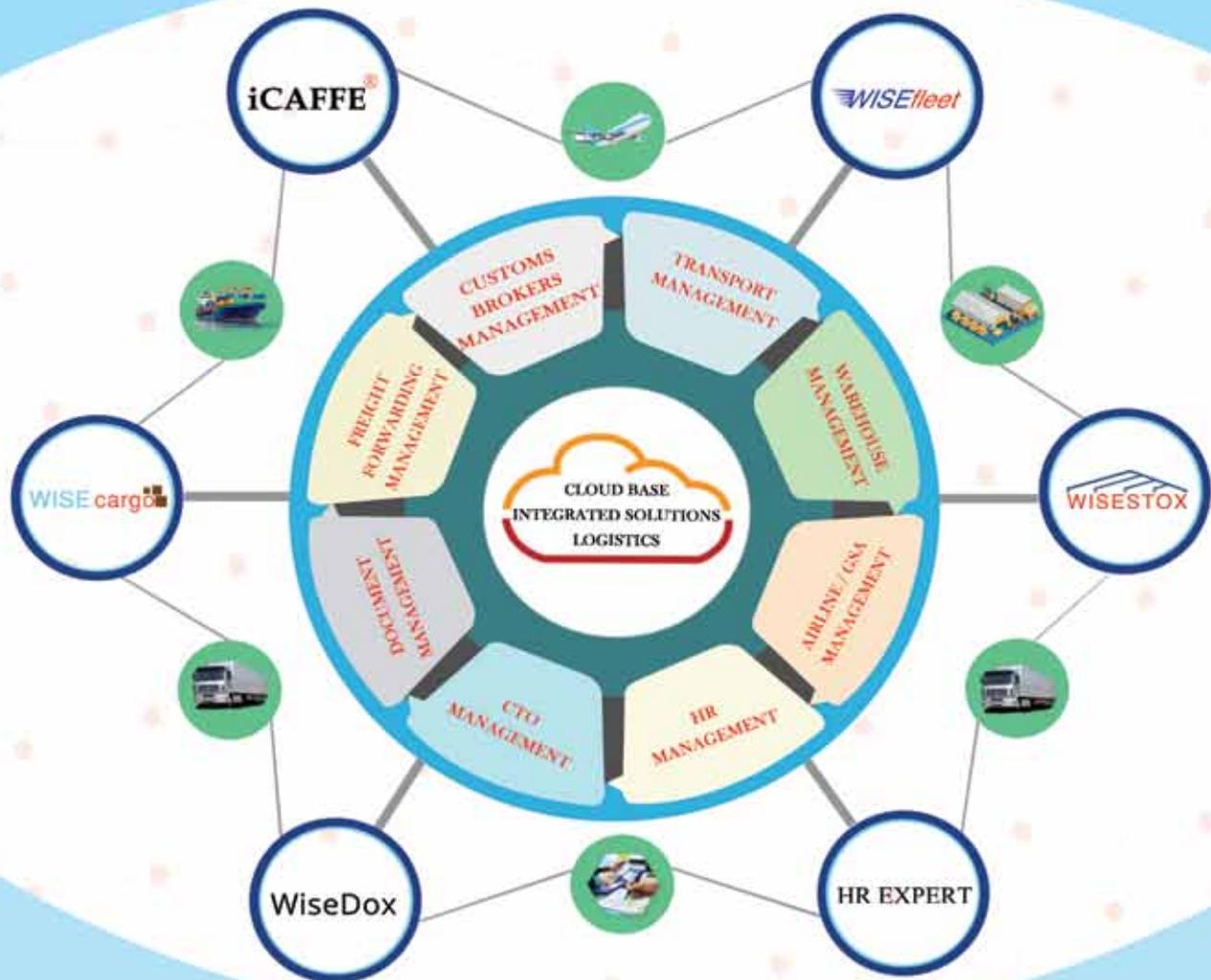
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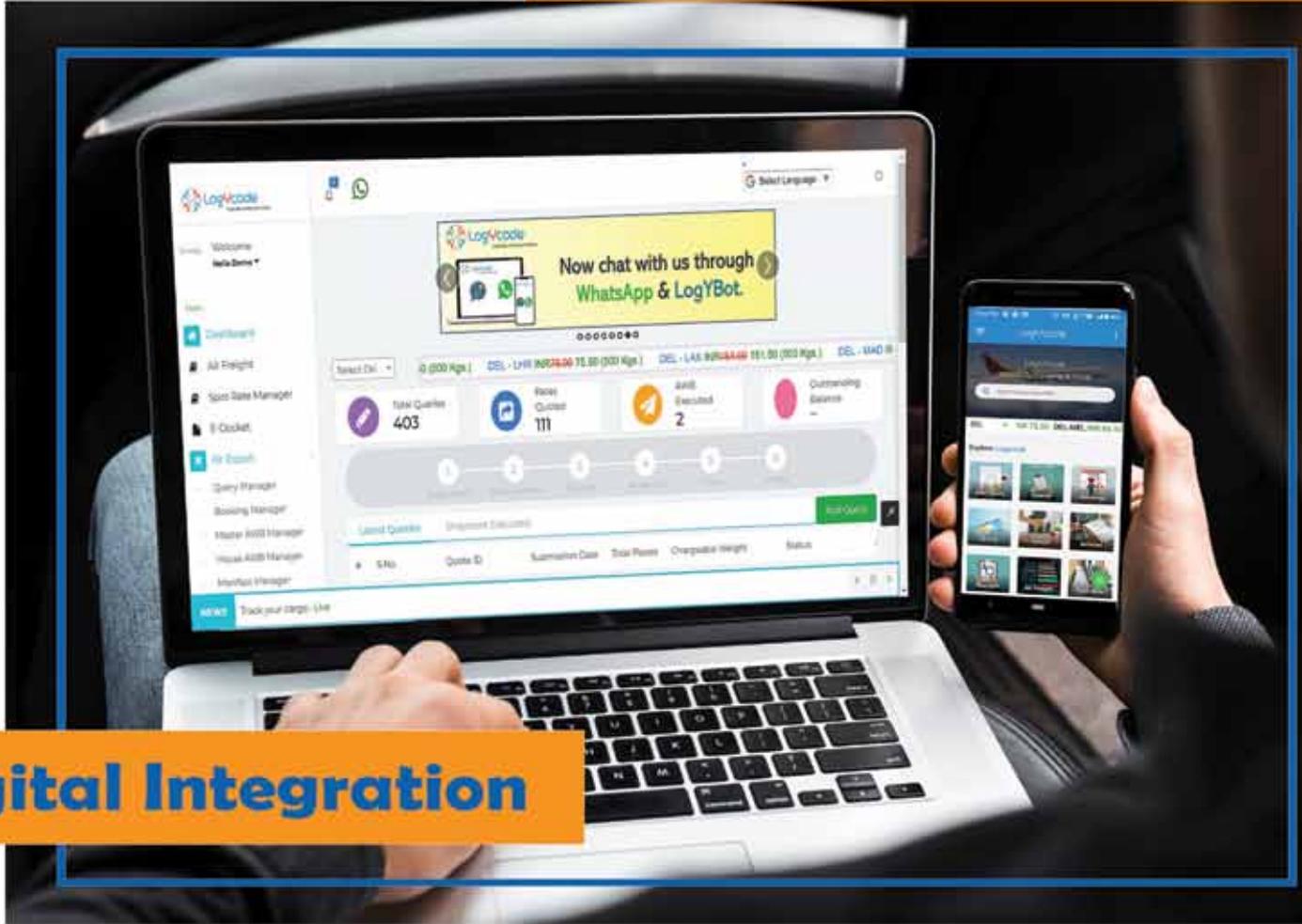


A walk down memory lane ACAAI 2018

The 44th annual convention of Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI), held at Abu Dhabi last year, saw a conglomeration of industry veterans gathered for fruitful sessions.



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