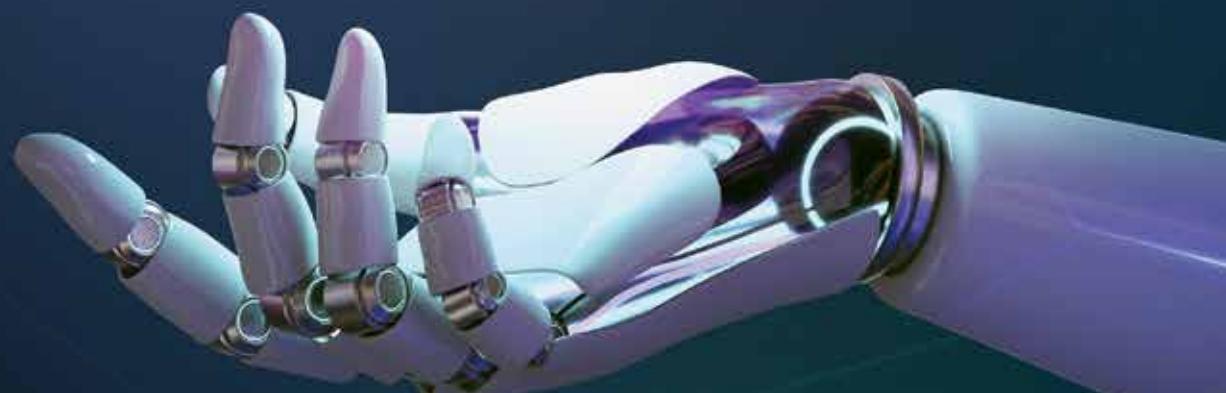
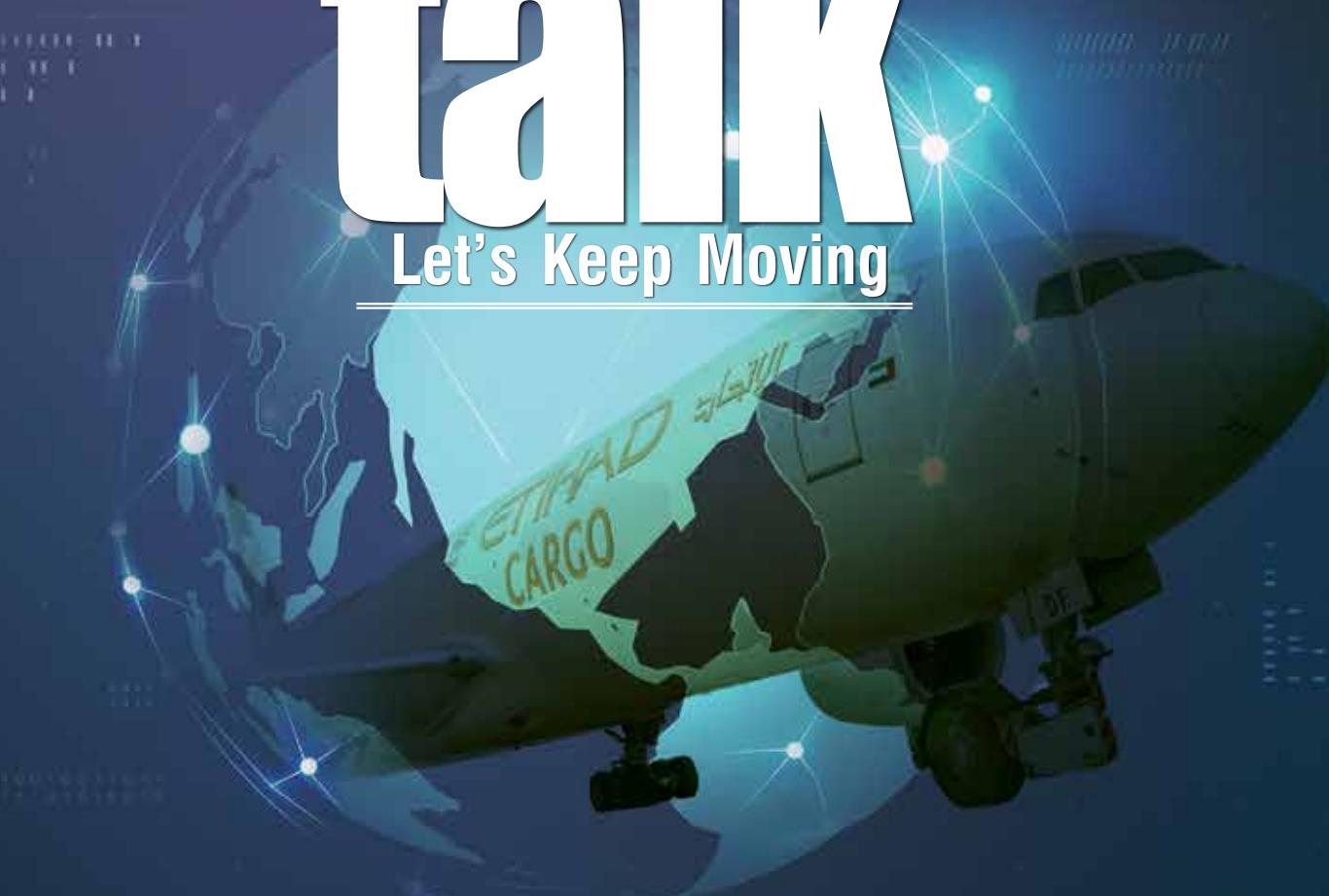


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## Cargo on strategic expansion path in Gulf region



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# FLEET EXPANSION ON CARDS FOR 2026

As 2026 unfolds, the Gulf is no longer preparing for the future of air cargo and logistics — it is shaping it. With rapid regional transformation, accelerating technology adoption and an aggressive push for economic diversification under Saudi Vision 2030 and the UAE's national growth agenda, the region is positioning itself as a global nerve centre for cargo and supply chains.



 Dr Shehara Rizly Fernando

**F**rom the UAE to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other GCC countries are positioned for long-term growth, driven by strategic investments and expanding sectors such as e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, and enhancing global connectivity.

According to a short-term forecast by the Airports Council International Asia-Pacific & Middle East, the Middle East is likely to expand at 3.3 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2025–2028.

The geographical location of the Middle East has strengthened the region as a major hub for air cargo, supporting trade and attracting global logistics players. Ongoing economic development, large urban projects, and rising demand for advanced logistics services are speeding up the region's growth in global air freight.

One of the key areas in focus this year will be the airport slot allocation for cargo flights, which over the years has become a challenging issue across the globe. Another issue is parking of large vehicles, which has many restrictions for the cargo operators.

The Gulf region is looking at developing new terminals for cargo operations so that they could offer clients a seamless experience and efficient services to ensure the goods not only reach on time but are also delivered to customers on time. Changing customer behaviour, accelerated by tech and health needs, has made e-commerce and pharma crucial. Creation of pharma hubs in some GCC countries has an edge in distribution as accessibility-wise, they are far ahead of the rest of the world. This New Year will focus more on the new ongoing investments to build a stronger Middle Eastern cargo hub.





## Smarter infrastructure fuels cargo scale

We expect growth in air cargo, airport logistics, and automated warehousing across the Middle East, driven by capacity expansion, e-commerce, and increasing performance from operators. For DIMOS, 2026 will be a year of consolidation and scale: We see greater demand for upgrades of existing systems than green-field projects. This means operators will focus more on improving efficiency and reliability within their current setups. Upgrading infrastructure will be a practical and cost-effective step before investing in new developments.



**Martin Bremen**  
Managing Director  
DIMOS FZCO

## Port closures hitting global supply chains

Air freight continues to rise as geopolitics, disruptions, shutdowns, shortages, and port closures affect global supply chains. The UAE and the Gulf have become transshipment hubs, and are growing into manufacturing hubs. Our focus is on nearshoring and working with suppli-



**Nadia Abdul Aziz**  
President  
NAFL

**“When there are global disruptions, having everything close makes deliveries easier and more consistent.”**

ers and traders within the region. When there are global disruptions, having everything close makes deliveries easier, compliant, and consistent. This approach helps reduce costs and lead times. It strengthens the region's role in global trade and makes supply chains more resilient.

**“We expect growth in cargo, logistics, and automated warehousing, driven by expansion and e-commerce.”**





## Growth, expansion in coming years

We see potential for improvement because Dubai has a large migrant worker community, and the populations in our key markets have also increased. These factors create more demand and opportunity. We are focused in these markets and believe the upcoming years will bring growth, expansion, and better performance across the board. With continued focus, these markets will not only grow but also outperform expectations. The rising demand will further enhance our ability to deliver consistent and high-quality services across the region.

**“With continued focus, these markets will not only grow but also outperform expectations.”**



**Razmal Assen**  
Executive Director  
Scanwell Logistics

## Modern fleet to make waves in the market

This year the focus is on strong growth and strategic expansion. This year, a major network expansion is planned, along with the development of new and diversified routes. These initiatives aim to enhance connectivity, increase capac-



**Abdul Shukoor**  
Air Freight Manager  
BGL Cargo

**“We are committed to delivering service to our customers, and with our modern fleet, we aim to offer more value.”**

ity, and deliver more reliable and efficient air freight solutions to better support customers and meet evolving market demands. The plan also focuses on faster and flexible services. Efforts will be made to simplify operations and meet customer needs more effectively.





## Years ahead to drive environmental growth

2026 is vital for us as we plan to expand our network. This expansion reflects the investments we have made in growing our network and improving our operations. We are committed to delivering efficiency, reliability, and value. Every step is aimed towards driving sustainable growth. Our focus will remain on building stronger connections and achieving new milestones. We are determined to make 2026 a landmark year, setting new standards in performance and service. Every initiative we take will reinforce our position and create even greater opportunities.

**“The expansion in 2026 reflects the investments we have made in growing our network and improving operations.”**



**Evelyn Alwino**  
Cargo Global Manager  
Easter Hemisphere,  
Kenya Airways

## Better opportunities as market expands

We expect the industry to see more commercial opportunities as the market continues to expand. We anticipate growth in airline and carrier ops across the region. The focus will be on delivering efficient services and operational standards to meet industry requirements. The objective is to

**“The focus will be on delivering efficient services and operational standards to meet the industry's requirements.”**

reach more airlines and carriers across the region. We aim to strengthen our presence in key markets and build long-term relationships with industry players. By continuously improving our services, we plan to set higher benchmarks for efficiency and reliability in the region.

## Demand will fuel region's growth in 2026

I see demand coming into this region, especially with the rise of e-commerce and the region's plans for growth. Supply chain and air freight will also contribute to this. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah will benefit with links to Africa, Eastern CIS, and Eastern Europe. Forecast from other sectors looks positive, and the outlook is promising. Growing demand will encourage investment in logistics and transportation infra. Companies will improve efficiency and capacity to meet market needs. Overall, the region is set to become an even stronger hub for trade.



**Jo Ann Ignacio**  
Commercial Manager  
KS Global Logistics

**“Dubai, Abu Dhabi & Sharjah will benefit with links to Africa, Eastern CIS, and Eastern Europe. Forecasts look positive.”**

**Prem Gangwaani**  
Managing Director  
Ascent Air Cargo

## Digital milestones paving the road ahead

We still have a long road ahead. In terms of digitalisation, we still have milestones to achieve this year. EDGE will launch a global freight platform and continue improving digitalisation with our SAP ERP system. I expect progress and hope to deliver on all our goals. Every improvement now lays the foundation for greater efficiency and smoother operations in the future. Each milestone achieved brings us closer to fully optimised processes across the organisation. With continued focus and dedication, we are confident of turning our plans into measurable results.

**“Every improvement now lays the foundation for greater efficiency and smoother operations in the future.”**



**Yann Corvellec**  
Group Director  
Global Logistics, EDGE

## Geopolitical pressure likely to ease

Cargo capacity will increase, demand will remain strong, and we hope the market will become more stable. We expect fuel prices to decrease, and global geopolitical pressures to ease. The disruptions in 2025 were difficult, but the new year will bring balance.



**Sanjeev Gadhia**  
Founder & CEO  
Astral Aviation

**“The disruptions in 2025, US tariffs and de minimis changes, were difficult, but the new year will bring balance.”**

Improvements will allow airlines and freight operators to plan more effectively. Stronger stability will encourage investment in infra and tech. We anticipate smoother operations and more predictable supply chains across the region. Overall, 2026 looks set to be a year of recovery, growth, and renewed opportunities.





# Digital shift redefining cargo and logistics

The Gulf region's prowess in air cargo, logistics, and supply chain management is largely due to its early and significant adoption of advanced technology and digitalisation, which has driven efficiency, resilience, and global connectivity. Technological innovations, supported by strategic moves like the UAE National Strategy for AI 2031 have transformed the industry.



Dr Shehara Rizly Fernando

**A**s the Middle East enters an era where air cargo, logistics and supply chain management are defined by ambition, innovation, and strategic reinvention resulting in transformative changes. Today the region is leveraging its geographic advantage with renewed purpose by investing in infrastructure, advanced technologies, and integrated trade ecosystems.

The UAE took the lead many years ago and spearheaded the rise with bold national strategies to position logistics as a central pillar of economic diversification. Today, other countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain have also joined hands and are seeking solutions which are efficient and revenue earners.

Each nation is investing on state-of-the-art cargo hubs, multimodal transport corridors and smart freezones, which provide flexibility of moving goods across continents with AI-driven and next-generation solutions. It is imperative to mention the growth of e-commerce that keeps increasing globally for rapid and reliable delivery.

A notable change in the region is the shared vision — from the UAE and KSA to Qatar. These countries are on their way to becoming some of the world's most agile, resilient, and sustainable logistics getaways. Although worldwide supply chains face various challenges, the region is on the path to redefine and adopt the best practices of global trade — setting new benchmarks for connectivity, competitiveness, and long-term growth.

Industry experts shared their insights with **CARGOTALK**.



## Drones to become the norm soon

I believe we are moving to a stage where automation will become the norm. I see drones being used to service remote areas where aircraft would not normally operate. Drones help minimise human risk, promote safety, and help in timely delivery. The air cargo market is set to grow further. E-commerce has become a major part of every business, representing the future for emerging economies. I believe we are moving in the right direction to ensure that individuals in remote places can access goods they previously could not, within reasonable time frames.



**Aaron Smith**  
Director  
ACI Logistics

## Air cargo integral to global supply chain

The future of the industry is very positive. It has evolved significantly from the 60s and 70s. It is now an integral part of the supply chain. Previously, the focus was on the passenger side of the business. Today, the scenario has completely changed. Air cargo equally contributes to airline sus-



**Charles Wijesundera**  
Group CEO  
M&C Aviation Group

**“ Previously, the focus was on the passenger side of the business. Today, air cargo equally contributes to airline sustainability.”**

tainability. The industry is driven by technology, innovation, and changing consumer demands. Automation and digitalisation are improving efficiency and reducing turnaround times. Air cargo plays a central role in connecting markets and enabling economic development worldwide.

**“ Drones help minimise human risk, promote safety, and help in timely delivery. A key step is the adoption of SAF.”**





## Trade confidence returns as digital power rises

Looking at the future for China, the CIS, the Middle East, and Africa, three factors will shape the industry. First, the tariff war will fade. Its decline will restore confidence among countries to trade with each other again. Second, the Global South will become a real power. Third, driven by AI, the new digital economy will accelerate processes faster than anything we planned or anticipated. Nearly 80% of the economy now moves by sea and air. Growth will continue to drive demand for air cargo solutions and advanced supply chain management.

**“Growth will continue to drive demand for air cargo solutions and advanced supply chain management.”**



**Hamdi Osman**  
CEO & Founder  
SolitAir Holding

## Better resources result in higher revenue

Each country is investing in its own resources. For example, the UAE is developing new terminals in Jebel Ali and enhancing Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah, while Abu Dhabi is also becoming a major port. Similarly, Sohar is building new terminals. Each country has its own ambitions, offering



**Marc Prasad**  
Regional VP, ALSI Global LLC (Global Network Development & Spl Projects)

**“Each country has its own ambitions, offering more options to agents and forwarding companies to bring in business.”**

more options to agents and forwarding companies to bring in business, use their ports as gateways, and scale their operations. With all these developments, revenue and business are set to increase significantly.



## Sustainable operations are the way forward

We are hoping for growth, provided regional and global tensions ease. We can only hope and pray for stability — both politically and economically — and for regional instability to decline. If that happens, 2026 looks promising. Sustainability is playing a big role for us. Digitisation is key, and the systems we are implementing leverage AI.

It will make us more efficient, more sustainable, and better equipped to serve. In 2026, we aim to integrate more AI into our operations, grow where possible, expand our reach, and offer improved solutions to our partners.

**“Digitisation is key, and the systems we are implementing leverage artificial intelligence, which is the way forward.”**



**Rohit Thakwani**  
CEO  
Airglow Aviation



## Drones will enhance, not replace, traditional ops

The future of air cargo will continue to evolve with new technologies and shifting market dynamics. Drones and next-generation aircraft will enhance end-to-end cargo services, especially for hard-to-reach destinations. However, these technolo-



**Zameer Marikkar**  
CCO  
Fis Cargo

**“Drones and next-gen aircraft will enhance end-to-end cargo services, especially for hard-to-reach destinations.”**

gies will not significantly impact freighter ops, as freighters manage higher volumes and larger tonnage. Looking ahead to 2026, e-commerce will take a larger market share and traditional commodity movements, including pharma, textiles, and engineering goods will remain strong.



# ENABLING THE RISE OF A NEW ECONOMIC SUPERPOWER.

The Global South, a once-flippant definition of developing nations, is fast becoming synonymous with rising prosperity and sustainability.

And logistics is playing a leading role, with easy, quick, regular and dependable trading access through a central hub. The hub is Dubai, rapidly gaining the reputation as Capital of the Future. The access is SolitAir, the newest 'middle mile' freight airline which is busy rewriting the playbook on speed and reliability.

SolitAir is the only scheduled cargo carrier, which allows 'first mile' and 'last mile' operators to function with a supremely more efficient timetable, scalable according to customer need.

Secondly, we have the capability to carry sensitive cargo such as medicine and other priority payloads which may require temperature control.

Thirdly, we're opening up new destinations throughout the Global South. Many of these communities have been under-served in the past but have not been lacking in ambition or economic potential.

To efficiently serve this region makes us proud. But to play such a significant role in the growth and prosperity of this newly self-determined community of nations, well, that makes us humble indeed.





# Etihad Cargo's SmartTrack brings transparency to cargo

In today's fast-paced logistics landscape, access to shipment information is imperative. In this regard, Etihad Cargo's SmartTrack meets this demand by offering a service that goes beyond tracking, giving customers transparency and control over their shipments at every stage, explained **Jacob David, Senior Manager, Cargo Products, Etihad Cargo**.

 CT Bureau

**E**tihad Cargo has officially launched its SmartTrack solution, offering customers a new level of visibility and transparency for their shipments. SmartTrack is not a product itself, but a solution built around an IoT-enabled device, which monitors shipments throughout the supply chain.

The tracker was first introduced at Air Cargo Europe in Munich in June and is now available to customers globally. What sets SmartTrack apart is its ability to provide end-to-end transparency. "The SmartTrack solutions that we offer to customers have six sensors — shock, tilt, humidity, temperature, light, and location. Our customers have visibility

*Beyond basic monitoring, SmartTrack offers added value through its AI-enabled control tower*

and complete transparency of their shipment health from the shipper all the way to the consignee," said Jacob David, Senior Manager, Cargo Products, Etihad Cargo.

Customers can tag shipments at their own facility or have their shippers tag them. Each SmartTrack shipment is checked by a dedicated 24-hour



control centre at Etihad Cargo's head office, where trained staff continuously track shipments and only intervene if there is a credible alert.

**SmartTrack is a single-use device that offers end-to-end data capabilities as part of a service agreement**

Beyond basic monitoring, SmartTrack offers added value through its AI-enabled control tower. According to David, this system filters out noise, providing customers with reliable and relevant data rather than overwhelming them with unnecessary information. SmartTrack is particularly valuable for sensitive and high-value shipments. David highlighted perishables, luxury goods, semiconductors, artwork, live animals, gold, diamonds, and temperature-sensitive cosmetics as examples of commodities that receive help from real-time monitoring.

"If you have high-sensitive shipments, you want to know what is happening throughout the journey, especially in regions, such as Abu Dhabi where temperatures can exceed 40°C when the aircraft doors open," he said.

Unlike traditional data loggers, which are often reactive and require returns, SmartTrack is a single-use device that offers end-to-end data capabilities as part of a service agreement. This approach ensures customers receive exact and reliable information throughout the shipment journey, overcoming the limitations of traditional FSU messages, which can sometimes be late or inaccurate.

Security and data privacy are central to SmartTrack. David emphasised that no sensitive personal information, such as names or addresses, is collected. The system only tracks shipment-related data such as weight, volume, commodity, and dimensions. All data remains within the Etihad Cargo ecosystem, and customer access is protected through single sign-on. The range of commodities

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Shock, tilt, humidity, temperature, light, and location sensors
- ❖ Provides real-time data for temperature-sensitive shipments
- ❖ Dedicated team monitors each shipment
- ❖ Immediate intervention on credible alerts
- ❖ Ensures end-to-end shipment health
  - ❖ Filters out unnecessary data
- ❖ Provides reliable and relevant insights
- ❖ Updates every 30 minutes for high-value goods
- ❖ Tags shipments at customer or shipper facility
- ❖ No personal data collected
- ❖ Data remains within Etihad Cargo ecosystem
- ❖ Protected single sign-on for customers



benefiting from SmartTrack continues to grow. David explained that during testing, customers showed particular interest in high-value and temperature-sensitive products. "With semiconductors, luxury goods, artwork, live animals, and temperature-sensitive products, SmartTrack provides granular, real-time monitoring with updates every 30 minutes," he said.

Etihad Cargo believes SmartTrack will set a new benchmark for shipment transparency in the air cargo industry. By offering AI-enabled monitoring, real-time alerts, and comprehensive data analytics, the system allows customers to track their shipments with confidence. 

# From innovation to impact autonomous logistics take flight

LODD Autonomous is changing the way of goods delivery by partnering with cargo and logistics majors. From Abu Dhabi to the remote parts of Africa, Hili is showing how technology can overcome challenges. These partnerships point to a future where drones and traditional delivery work together to make moving goods smarter and more reliable.



(Third from left) Badr Abbas, Emirates SkyCargo's Divisional Senior Vice President; Adnan Kazim, Deputy President, Emirates; Rashid Al Manai, Chief Executive Officer of LODD Autonomous, Tim Clark, President, Emirates and others at the signing between Emirates SkyCargo and LODD Autonomous

## CT Bureau

LODD Autonomous, the leading pioneer in advanced air mobility, is expanding the use of its hybrid heavy-lift vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft, 'Hili,' across multiple regions and logistics partners. From Abu Dhabi to Africa, and across Emirates SkyCargo's global network, Hili is being positioned as a solution to some pressing challenges in middle- and last-mile logistics. The unmanned aircraft is changing how goods are ferried and redefining the logistics ecosystem.

In Abu Dhabi, LODD has partnered with Aramex to explore Hili's integration into regional delivery operations. The collaboration centres in on a

pilot programme designed to streamline middle-mile delivery by transporting goods between Aramex hubs and distribution centres. With a payload capacity of 250 kg and a range of up to 700 km, Hili is engineered for efficiency across varied terrains and tight delivery schedules, offering a potential solution to the growing demands of fast-moving logistics operations.

### ARAMEX PARTNERSHIP

Rashid Al Manai, CEO, LODD Autonomous, said, "Aramex has for long adopted advanced technologies to enhance the logistics sector. Through this collaboration, we are showing how Hili can be joined into existing operations, deliver increased speed, safety, and predictability to

*Hili is being positioned as a solution to some pressing challenges in middle- and last-mile logistics*

middle-mile delivery. This pilot project is not only a milestone for LODD but also a step towards redefining how autonomous aerial logistics can support high-demand, time-critical networks across the region."

The Aramex pilot, supported by the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO), is being rolled out in two

phases. The first phase focuses on delivering parcels from the Musaffah facility to temporary drone delivery points in Abu Dhabi, where couriers can pick up shipments for local distribution. Another phase will explore long-range deliveries to evaluate Hili's performance in complex routing scenarios. Both phases are exploratory, designed to assess operational feasibility and economic viability, while laying the groundwork for potential large-scale deployment.

"The partnership shows our commitment to innovation and sustainability in last-mile and middle-mile logistics," said Nicolas Sibuet, Acting Group CEO, Aramex. "By working with LODD Autonomous, we aim to test new autonomous technologies to deliver

smarter, faster, and greener results for our customers across the Middle East."

## STRETCHING INTO AFRICA

LODD has extended its reach beyond the UAE by partnering with Astral Aviation to address the last-mile logistics challenge in Africa. The collaboration aims to introduce Hili into African networks, where geographic diversity and limited infrastructure impede prompt delivery of goods. This marks a significant step toward deploying drone-based cargo solutions in remote and underserved regions.

"This partnership allows us to advance our collaboration with Hili and bring this technology to Africa. It is a solution designed specifically for the continent," commented Sanjeev Gadhia, Founder and CEO, Astral Aviation. Hili's autonomous capabilities promise to provide faster and more flexible transport solutions across difficult terrains, bypassing conventional road or air transport constraints.

Rashid Mattar Al Manai added, "This is a testament to our solution, which has attracted existing and



(Left) Nicolas Sibuet, Acting Group CEO of Aramex, with Rashid Mattar Al Manai, CEO of LODD Autonomous at the signing between Aramex and LODD Autonomous

potential customers. This aircraft is optimised for transporting time-sensitive items in Africa."

### PACT WITH EMIRATES SKYCARGO

In Dubai, Emirates SkyCargo is working with LODD to explore drone-powered delivery solutions on a global scale. The two companies will test Hili across Emirates SkyCargo's

*The collaboration aims to introduce Hili into African networks, where limited infrastructure impedes prompt delivery of goods*

network through feasibility studies, regulatory checks, and live demonstrations. The goal is to add the autonomous VTOL aircraft to the airline's ground operations, supporting its passenger fleet and freighters, while improving efficiency and sustainability. Using Hili, the airline can handle parcels faster, rely less on traditional airport logistics, and respond quickly to changing customer needs.





(Sitting) Badr Abbas, Emirates SkyCargo's Divisional Senior Vice President, and Rashid Al Manai, Chief Executive Officer, LODD Autonomous, at the signing between Emirates SkyCargo and LODD Autonomous

Emphasising the role of emerging technologies in shaping logistics, Badr Abbas, Divisional Senior Vice President, Emirates SkyCargo, said, "The partnership with LODD reflects our commitment to introduce innovative products that resolve our customer's transportation challenges. Emerging technologies will form the foundation of the next era of logistics, and we will be at the forefront of this movement, investing

our ability into the development of innovations that drive tangible impact."

The Hili aircraft, developed and manufactured in Abu Dhabi, is fully autonomous from take-off to landing. By integrating this platform into a range of logistics networks, from regional delivery hubs in the UAE to the challenging landscapes of Africa and the global reach of Emirates SkyCargo, LODD is shaping a

future where unmanned aerial logistics can coexist seamlessly with traditional methods.

Rashid Mattar Al Manai stressed, "The UAE's vision is built on harnessing innovation to propel daily life forward. Our collaboration with Emirates SkyCargo blends LODD's frontier technologies with the country's enduring commitment to safe, scalable, and sustainable logistics. Together, we will accelerate the

*The Hili aircraft, developed and manufactured in Abu Dhabi, is fully autonomous from take-off to landing*

adoption of drone-powered solutions that expand reach, reduce delivery times, and strengthen the UAE's position as a global logistics hub, while upholding the highest standards of safety and regulatory excellence."

These initiatives reflect a concerted effort by LODD and its partners to transform the logistics landscape. By deploying autonomous VTOL aircraft in diverse environments, from urban centres in the UAE to remote African regions and global airline operations, LODD is showcasing the practical and economic potential of drone-based cargo systems. The Hili project exemplifies how innovation, technology, and collaboration can converge to address long-standing challenges in speed, accessibility, and efficiency across the ecosystem. 



(Left) Sanjeev Gadhia, Founder and CEO, Astral Aviation with Rashid Mattar Al Manai, CEO, LODD Autonomous, at the signing between Astral Aviation and LODD Autonomous

# CROSS HOTELS & RESORTS

## YOUR LUXURY ESCAPE TO ASIA



### THAILAND

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- Lumen Bangkok Srinakarin\*

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- Cross Pattaya Oceanphere
- Cross Vibe Pattaya Seaphere

#### Chiang Mai

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- Away Chiang Mai Thapae
- Cross Vibe Chiang Mai Decem

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- Cross Bali Breakers
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- Cross Vibe Paasha Atelier Bali Kuta

- Away Bali Legian Camakila

- Tanadewa Resort Ubud Bali by Cross Collection
- Tanadewa Villas Nusa Dua Bali by Cross Collection
- Kaura Bali



# Electric aircraft to boost sustainable cargo in the UAE

As the UAE strengthens its position as a key logistics hub, the air cargo industry is looking for ways to grow sustainably. Besides opportunity, increasing trade and e-commerce bring with them the challenge of reducing emissions and using resources more efficiently. Electric aircraft offers a solution, making logistics cleaner and reliable.

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**D**ubai-based e-Smart Group is taking a step in sustainable logistics with plans to introduce 20 all-electric ALIA CTOL cargo aircraft from USA-based aerospace innovator, BETA Technologies. The move reflects the company's focus on green, technology-driven air cargo operations across Europe, the United Kingdom, and the UAE.

The aircraft, run by e-Smart Avia, the Group's air cargo division, are designed for regional transport. They can carry a 560 kg payload in a 5.6 cubic metre cabin and use quiet, zero-emission electric propulsion, making them ideal for frequent short-haul flights connecting major hubs. First deliveries are expected in 2027, with five firm orders and 15 additional options.

Denis Ilin, CEO, e-Smart Logistics, said, "The quality,



(Left) Denis Ilin, CEO, e-Smart Logistics, and Simon Newitt, Head of Sales, BETA Technologies

environmental benefits, and performance offered by BETA for the missions we have found are unmatched by any competitor. Adding these aircraft is fully aligned with our mission to provide our clients with unparalleled services and higher-value, sustainable products."

The electric aircraft will serve high-value, time-critical markets such as express shipments, e-commerce deliveries, medical logistics, life sciences, and Aircraft on Ground operations. In the UAE, this technology allows e-Smart to link regional logistics hubs with

zero-emission, high-frequency cargo flights, supporting the country's push toward more sustainable supply chains.

By integrating these next-generation aircraft into its network, e-Smart is aiming to redefine air cargo operations in the region. The company plans to combine electric flight with existing logistics infrastructure to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and offer faster, more reliable services to its customers.

As electric aviation technology matures and regulatory frameworks evolve, initiatives like this could transform regional logistics, making green, technology-enabled air cargo a standard part of supply chain operations. For e-Smart Group, the UAE represents a key market to demonstrate the operational and environmental benefits of electric aircraft while expanding its presence across Europe and the Middle East. 



# With Dubai base, M&C Aviation eyes global expansion

M&C Aviation reveals plans to expand its operations, build a bigger global presence, and prepare for new opportunities. Despite hurdles, M&C Aviation's planning and forward-thinking approach have kept it on a steady path. In an interview, **Charles Wijesundera, Group CEO, M&C Aviation Group**, highlights the firm's vision for next year.

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**M**&C Aviation Group is gearing up to enter the new year, driven by expansion, strategic investments, and a steady outlook across global markets. Despite economic fluctuations and shifting industry conditions in 2025, the group has shown resilience through planning and long-term vision.

"Consistent performance is possible because of the company's approach. We have always been forward-thinking and forward-planning, so despite challenges around the global economy, we have performed well in 2025," claimed Charles Wijesundera, Group CEO, M&C Aviation Group.

Over the past year, M&C Aviation Group expanded significantly, opening operations in seven new countries, across the Middle East and Africa (MEA). The company now functions in eight countries in the Middle East



Charles Wijesundera  
Group CEO  
M&C Aviation Group

## Markets — traditionally dependent on imports — are now strengthening their export potential

and 11 in Africa. In total, the group has grown its worldwide footprint to 33 countries. Founded in 1995 in the Indian subcontinent, the company

has evolved from early GSA beginnings into a widespread network, covering multiple continents. Wijesundera said the Middle East — once seen as an import-driven hub — is experiencing a shift driven by changing dynamics in Asia, especially China. This transition is opening new opportunities in the MEA.

Emphasising increasing production in Egypt and Jordan, where M&C Aviation has recently expanded, he said these markets — traditionally dependent on imports — are now strengthening their export potential. The group's latest expansion into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aligns with KSA's efforts to develop its export sector. "The investment is worthwhile in the Middle Eastern region or the MENA region," he said, adding that the long-term outlook is strong.

Dubai, he highlighted, continues to be a global trade centre, offering connectivity to

around 50 airlines in an hour! Due to this advantage, M&C Aviation Group will shift its operational HQ to Dubai from January 2026. "From Dubai, we will have access to the entire world within seven to 12 hours," he added.

Looking ahead, Wijesundera said air cargo will remain a vital part of global logistics. With airlines recognising cargo as a key revenue contributor, he expects sustained growth in the years ahead. As M&C Aviation strengthens its network across the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas, the group is positioned for expansion and industry leadership as it heads into next year. 

## QUICK STATS

- ❖ Founded in 1995 in the Indian subcontinent
- ❖ Operates in 33 countries across ME, Africa, Asia, and the Americas
- ❖ Presence in 8 Middle Eastern countries
- ❖ Presence in 11 African countries
- ❖ Expanded in 2025 to Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia
- ❖ Operational HQ moving to Dubai in January
- ❖ Strength lies in forward-thinking strategy and proactive planning



# Regional developments creating opportunities in new markets

ALSI Global is entering the new year with confidence. Building on its performance in the last year, the firm is expanding its reach across the Middle East, introducing new services, and strengthening teams to meet growing demand in the sector, says **Marc Prasad, Regional Vice President, ALSI Global LLC**.

## CT Bureau

**T**hough 2025 started off with significant challenges for the air cargo industry, the latter half showed strong performance, with volumes surpassing those of the previous year. ALSI Global has capitalised on this momentum, focusing on investments in personnel and infrastructure to support continued growth.

As this year begins, the industry is optimistic, expecting new expansions, routes, and emerging opportunities. The firm is eyeing significant expansion; new products are being launched, and business development teams are strengthened across the region.



**Marc Prasad**  
Regional VP  
ALSI Global LLC

Speaking about the last year, Marc Prasad, Regional VP, ALSI Global LLC, averred, "The industry has experienced growth with volumes exceeding those of the previous year.



At ALSI Global, we continue to invest in human resources to support expansion, and overall performance has been strong." He noted this momentum has been influenced by shifting market dynamics across regions around the world.

Commenting on developments in key markets, he said the Chinese market is fluctuating, African markets are experiencing rising volumes, and the Middle East is robust. "Investments in legislation and logistics at the government level provide a supportive environment, which allows us to manage volumes efficiently in each country," Prasad explained.

He also outlined the company's current footprint and its upcoming expansion plans. The company currently operates in Oman, the UAE, Qatar, and KSA, with potential expansion into Kuwait and the Kingdom of Bahrain. However, alongside a positive market outlook and growing operations across key markets, certain seasonal factors may present operational challenges. Overlapping peak periods, such as Ramadan and the Chinese New Year, are expected to put pressure on capacity and scheduling. Even so, proactive planning and effective client communication are expected to minimise disruptions.

When asked about the future of the logistics and supply chain sector, he highlighted that regional infrastructure developments are creating new opportunities. In the UAE, major upgrades are underway at Jebel Ali, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, and Abu

*Chinese market is fluctuating, African markets are experiencing rising volumes, and the Middle East is robust*

Dhabi ports, while Oman continues to expand its facilities at Sohar. These enhancements provide freight forwarding firms with additional options, which is expected to drive revenue growth and improve efficiency across the sector.

With a clear focus on people, infrastructure, and emerging markets, ALSI Global is well-positioned to control industry growth. The company aims to navigate the challenges of this year with confidence, ensuring robust service delivery and continued expansion across its operational network. 

## GOAL FOR 2026

- ❖ Strategic investments in people and infrastructure
- ❖ Expansion into new markets across the Middle East
- ❖ New services and products on the horizon
- ❖ Focus on efficiency, reliability, and customer satisfaction

# More freighters, India capacity boost for Astral Aviation in '26

While the first half of 2025 was challenging, the latter half proved to be promising for the industry, even as companies adapted to changing market dynamics and explored new growth opportunities. In an interview, **Sanjeev Gadhia, CEO & Founder, Astral Aviation**, highlights the company's achievements over the past year and outlines plans for 2026.

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## What are the key developments for Astral Aviation in this year?

This year has been a significant one. We completed 25 years of operations and expanded our network. We launched flights from Hong Kong to Australia, increased frequencies from Hong Kong and Haikou to Johannesburg, and enhanced our perishables service from Nairobi to the Middle East, with scheduled operations to Dubai and Riyadh.

## What are the key developments for Astral last year?

E-commerce demand continues to drive the air cargo industry, with a noticeable shift from China–USA trade towards China to Europe, China to Middle East, and



Sanjeev Gadhia  
CEO & Founder  
Astral Aviation

China to Africa routes. Although tariffs have affected China–USA shipments, they have opened new opportunities elsewhere. Trade from India to Africa is also increasing. Middle Eastern hubs, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, serve as transhipment points linking Asia with Africa. These trends are dynamic and require agility in flight operations.

### Could you elaborate on Astral Aviation's focus on perishables?

We transport perishables from Nairobi to the Middle East. Kenya is a lucrative market for cut flowers, fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat. More volumes are flowing into Dubai and Riyadh, and we expect the segment to expand at around 15 per cent annually. Return flights carry consumer goods and e-commerce products, which are originating from China, India, Vietnam, and South Korea and landing in the UAE before reaching Africa.

### What are your expectations for this year?

We expect the new year to bring stability, with improved balance between capacity and demand. Fuel prices are likely to ease, and geopolitical

*We expect the new year to bring stability, with improved balance between capacity and demand*

conditions may improve. These factors should create a level playing field and support growth.

### Do share more details on fleet expansion.

We plan to get more freighters, including Boeing 767-300, 737-800, and the first Boeing 777 converted freighter in Q3 2026 along with further acquisitions in 2027. We are increasing capacity to India — using the Navi Mumbai, Noida airports, and expanding into South Korea and Vietnam. These initiatives form a key part of our growth strategy. ☺



# Drone delivery to transform urban logistics in Dubai

Drones are transforming how the industry moves goods, streamlines supply chains, and overcomes challenges of congestion. By offering faster, safer, more reliable deliveries, drones optimise last-mile deliveries, reduce costs, and meet sustainability goals. Keeta Drone is putting this vision into action, using drones to enhance deliveries across hubs.

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**D**ubai is emerging as a global benchmark for drone-enabled urban logistics, with companies such as Keeta Drone demonstrating how autonomous aerial systems can refine supply chains in dense cities. By integrating drones into delivery networks, businesses are finding faster, safer, and more sustainable alternatives to traditional road-based logistics.

Keeta Drone, which secured Dubai's first Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) commercial drone licence in



**Dr Yinian Mao**  
President, Keeta Drone &  
Vice President, Meituan

2024, has developed a network linking commercial hubs, restaurants, and residential areas.



Its fourth generation autonomous drones, supported by automated ground units, enable reliable, contactless delivery of goods, reduce reliance on conventional transport, and address urban congestion.

Recent expansions, including new routes in Nad Al Sheba, illustrate the operational scalability of drone logistics. By linking key merchant locations to chosen drone landing points, Keeta Drone is providing businesses with a dependable channel for rapid deliveries, improving last-mile deliveries, and lowering operational costs.

"We believe a progressive policy is the first step for drone delivery to take off. Once we get in the air, we can discover more business opportunities," Dr Yinian Mao, President, Keeta Drone, and Vice President, Meituan, said.

The technology is also engineered to handle Dubai's challenging climate, including extreme heat, sandy, and windy conditions. AI-driven simulation systems allow drones to navigate complex urban terrains efficiently, minimising operational risk and ensuring predictable delivery schedules.

For businesses, the benefits are clear: Reduced delivery times, minimised dependency on road infrastructure, and a greener logistics footprint. Firms can use drone networks to enhance supply chain resilience, improve service levels, and meet corporate sustainability objectives.

Regulatory support from Dubai Civil Aviation Authority

**Keeta Drone has developed a network linking commercial hubs, restaurants, and residential areas**

(DCAA) and initiatives such as Dubai Silicon Oasis further facilitate operational expansion. With projections suggesting that up to 70 per cent of the city could be serviced by drones by 2030, early adopters have a significant competitive advantage in integrating aerial logistics into their operations.

As drone technology becomes more integrated into urban supply chains, Dubai is setting a benchmark for smart, sustainable logistics in the Middle East, demonstrating how cities can leverage innovation to meet the growing demands of commerce, residents, and sustainability. 

## IN SNIPPETS

- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> generation drones for faster deliveries
- ❖ Optimises last-mile logistics, reduces road congestion
- ❖ Built for extreme heat, wind, and sandy conditions
- ❖ Future coverage expected to reach 70% of Dubai by 2030



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# Digital payments rewriting the book on Impex supply chains

In a fast-growing hub like Dubai, trade moves faster than ever. Efficient and fast supply chains are the backbone of modern trade. To enhance trade and strengthen logistics, Dubai Customs is partnering with Binance Pay to integrate digital payments and blockchain technology, making imports and exports faster, reliable, and more efficient.

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**S**ince trade is evolving and so are logistics systems, Dubai is taking a major step to make trade and logistics faster and more efficient. Dubai Customs has partnered with Binance Pay to explore how blockchain and digital payment systems can improve customs operations. The goal is to make commercial and logistical transactions smoother, faster, and more transparent for businesses across the region.

His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman and CEO, DP World, and Chairman, Ports, Customs and

Free Zone Corporation, said, "We support initiatives enhancing Dubai's position as a trade and logistics hub, invest in advanced digital solutions to improve business efficiency, and build a next generation payment ecosystem that aligns with the D33 Economic Agenda. This partnership is a step toward creating a flexible economic environment capable of attracting future investments."

## DIGITAL TRADE, FASTER SUPPLY CHAINS

Dubai Customs has made rapid strides in digitising its operations. Digitalisation in logistics means efficient and faster

movement of goods across the supply chain. Many customs procedures are automated, helping shipments move through ports quickly. By integrating blockchain-based payments, such as Binance Pay, the authority aims to reduce delays, lower costs, and im-

prove cash flow for companies. This is particularly important for small and medium-sized businesses, which face challenges in accessing global markets and handling payments.

For logistics and supply chains, faster payment solutions can make a real impact. Shipments can clear customs quickly, carriers can get faster payments, and importers can manage their operations with fewer delays. At the same time, since blockchain technology adds transparency, every transaction and cargo movement can be tracked accurately. This helps reduce errors, fraud, and misunderstandings between

*Digitalisation in logistics means efficient and faster movement of goods across the supply chain*



(Second from left) Stephanie Emile, General Manager of Binance FZE in Dubai; Richard Teng, CEO of Binance; His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman and CEO of DP World and Chairman of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation; His Excellency Dr Abdulla Busenad, Director General of Dubai Customs and others at the signing of the MoU between Dubai Customs and Binance

suppliers, freight firms, and Customs authorities.

Dubai's leadership in adopting blockchain solutions shows its commitment to becoming a hub for smart trade and digital logistics. By combining advanced payment systems with automated customs procedures, the emirate is creating an environment where businesses can run more efficiently. The initiative also aligns with broader economic goals, attracting investment and supporting a modern, technology-driven economy.

## *By integrating digital payments into customs, Dubai is showing how logistics and trade can evolve*

Officials believe this partnership is a model for the future of logistics, where technology supports faster and reliable supply chains. As Dubai Customs and Binance Pay roll out



*(Standing) Richard Teng, CEO of Binance, His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman and CEO of DP World and Chairman of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation, (sitting) Stephanie Emile, General Manager of Binance FZE in Dubai, and His Excellency Dr Abdulla Busenad, Director General of Dubai Customs at the signing of the MoU*

these solutions, companies can expect smoother operations, quicker delivery times, and lower operational costs. This approach shows how innovation in payments and digital infra can strengthen

supply chains and make Dubai an attractive and ideal location for trade and investment. By integrating blockchain and digital payments into customs, Dubai is showing how logistics and trade can evolve

in the 21st century. Faster, transparent, and efficient supply chains are good for business — they help the region stay competitive in global trade and support the growth of a digital economy. ☀



# Putting the XL in oversized air cargo excellence

Oversized cargo has always challenged the limits of air transport. With traditional fleets struggling to keep up, Radia and UAE-based Maximus Air joined forces to offer a next-gen solution. Their partnership centres on the WindRunner, the world's largest cargo aircraft, designed to carry huge, bulky cargo safely and efficiently across the world.

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When it comes to cargo, demand is constantly changing — from daily shipments to oversized cargo. While regular cargo can be transported easily, moving huge, bulky ones has always been a logistics headache. To tackle this problem and make ferrying heavy cargo easier, Radia, the developer of the massive WindRunner cargo aircraft, has teamed up with UAE-based Maximus Air in a partnership aimed at reshaping the global air cargo market. The collaboration seeks to address the demand for transporting oversized and high-value cargo, an area where cargo capacity has long been limited.

Maximus Air, part of the Abu Dhabi Aviation Group, has earned recognition for heavy-lift operations, humanitarian missions, and specialised logistics. The airline serves government, defence, offshore, and commercial aviation sectors across the region. By combining this operational experience with Radia's WindRunner technology, the partnership aims at expanding access to efficient, large-scale cargo transport.

"WindRunner is designed to change how the world moves large and complex cargo," said Mark Lundstrom, CEO, Radia. "Maximus Air brings expertise in specialised airlift and global commercial operations, making them an ideal partner as we prepare for WindRunner's commercial entry into service."



*The collaboration seeks to address the demand for transporting oversized and high-value cargo*

## EFFICIENT CARGO HANDLING

The WindRunner aircraft is designed to carry more volume, offering six times the internal capacity of the Antonov AN-124. It can operate from semi-prepared runways, giving it flexibility in locations where heavy cargo planes cannot land. When it comes to industries such as energy, aerospace, defence, manufacturing, and emergency response, this could be a game changer. It promises to help provide faster and more

reliable solutions for moving oversized freight.

Under the partnership, Radia and Maximus Air plan to explore integrating WindRunner into commercial cargo operations worldwide. This includes route planning, logistics coordination, and services tailored to customers needing large, time-sensitive, or high-value shipments. The collaboration aims to develop new strategies for bridging the gap in oversized cargo capacity, which has been constrained by ageing aircraft fleets.

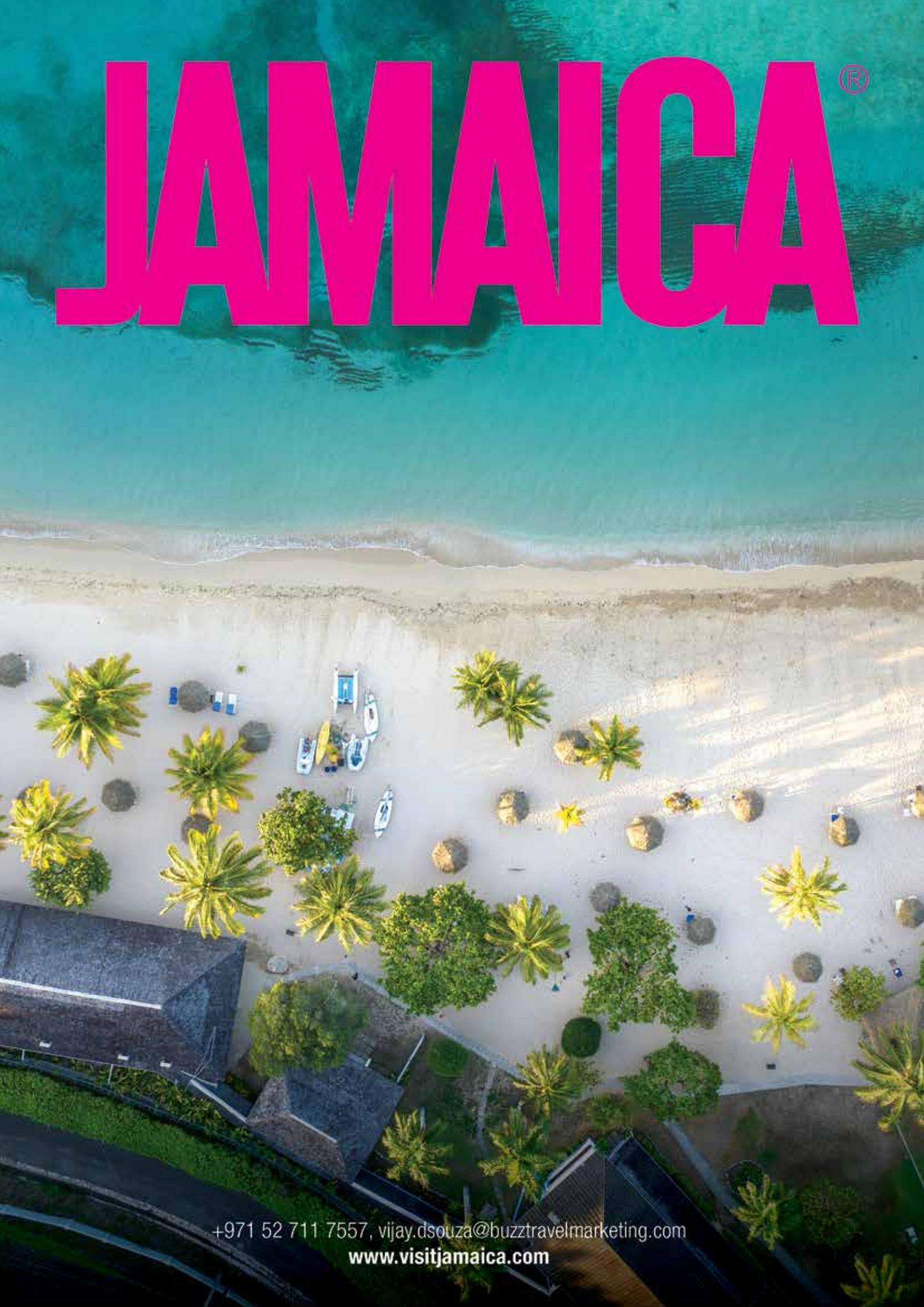
"Maximus Air has long provided reliable and responsive cargo operations for government, defence, and humanitarian sectors. This partnership is a forward step in expanding our capabilities and strengthening the UAE's leadership in global air cargo logistics," said Samir Ramadan, CEO, Maximus Air.

The partnership signals a shift in the heavy cargo sector, where innovation, scale, and operational flexibility are becoming critical. By bringing together Radia's next-generation aircraft and Maximus Air's regional expertise, the collaboration promises to offer faster, more versatile, and reliable cargo solutions for industries that rely on moving outsized freight efficiently. 

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ WindRunner is world's largest cargo plane
- ❖ Its capacity is six times that of the Antonov AN-124
- ❖ It can land on semi-prepared runways
- ❖ Maximus Air is a UAE-based heavy-lift and humanitarian cargo specialist
- ❖ Target sectors include energy, defence, aerospace, and manufacturing
- ❖ Collaboration covers global cargo operations, route planning
- ❖ Aims to close gap in oversized cargo capacity
- ❖ Partnership strengthens UAE's role in global logistics

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# Abu Dhabi sets pace in urban air mobility

Abu Dhabi is set to transform its logistics and transport network with the launch of its first vertiport system. The initiative will enable electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft to move goods quickly and efficiently across key hubs, reducing transit times and boosting supply chain efficiency.

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Abu Dhabi has taken a major step in modernising its transport infrastructure with the launch of its first vertiport network to support advanced air mobility operations. The initiative, led by the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Airports, the Integrated Transport Centre (Abu Dhabi Mobility), and the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), will integrate electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft into the emirate's transport and logistics systems.

The network is part of the Smart and Autonomous Vehicle Industries (SAVI) cluster, which focuses on deploying innovative, technology-driven mobility solutions. By connecting key urban and business hubs, including Zayed International Airport, Al Bateen Executive Airport, Yas Island, Saadiyat, and Abu Dhabi Island, the vertiports will provide fast, low-emission transport options that improve operational efficiency across the city.

For logistics operators, the introduction of eVTOL aircraft opens new avenues for rapid cargo and express delivery services. The network will enable the movement of goods alongside passengers, supporting time-sensitive operations and last-mile deliveries, particularly in congested urban areas. Each vertiport will feature integrated ground transport and digital infrastructure, ensuring smooth multimodal transfers and efficient cargo handling.



(Left to Right) HE Badr Al-Olama, Director-General of ADIO; HE Ahmed Jasim Al Zaabi, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development; HE Mohamed Ali Al Shorafa, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Transport; Dr Abdulla Hamad AlGhafli, Acting Director-General of the Integrated Transport Centre (Abu Dhabi Mobility); Elena Sorlini, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi Airports; and Eng. Aqeel Al Zarouni

*For industries like energy, defence, manufacturing, aerospace, and emergency response, this could be a game changer*

Abu Dhabi Airports will serve as the anchor delivery partner, overseeing the development, operations, and commercial readiness of the vertiport network. Meanwhile, the Integrated Transport Centre and GCAA will ensure safety, regulatory compliance, and seamless integration with existing aviation and transport systems.

Saif Mohammed Al Suwaidi, Director-General of the

GCAA, said, "What we are witnessing today marks the beginning of a new era, one that reflects a qualitative leap in aviation infrastructure and reaffirms the UAE's commitment to leading the global shift towards smarter and more sustainable mobility."

With more than ten state-of-the-art vertiports planned, Abu Dhabi is positioning itself as a global pioneer in next-generation logistics and urban mobility. The network is expected to reduce transit times, lower emissions, and provide a reliable alternative for high-value, time-critical shipments.

As the emirate integrates advanced air mobility into its transport ecosystem, logistics companies and supply chain planners will gain access to faster, cleaner, and more efficient options, reinforcing Abu

Dhabi's role as a hub for innovation-driven transport and logistics solutions.

## AT A GLANCE

- ❖ eVTOL aircraft will connect key hubs
- ❖ The network enables fast cargo and last-mile deliveries
- ❖ Vertiports link ground transport and digital systems
- ❖ Over 10 vertiports planned across Abu Dhabi
- ❖ Initiative cuts transit times, lowers emissions, and boosts efficiency

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# Innovation hub, warehouse to boost DHL ops in Dubai South

DHL's new developments in Dubai South reflect a shift in how the firm sees the future of logistics in MEA. With the opening of its next-generation Innovation Centre and plans for a large, carbon-neutral warehouse, DHL is creating a space where ideas and real-world ops meet, shaping how goods will move across the region in the years ahead.

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**S**pread across 1,700 sqm, the Innovation Centre brings together customers, startups, technology partners, academics, and DHL's own experts to think, test, and build. The space could host 100 people at a time, making it a place for conversations that often do not happen within traditional warehouses and offices. Here, technology is not showcased for show, but teams gather to solve real challenges, such as supply chain delays, rising costs, and sustainability pressures.

Irina Albanese, Head, Innovation Middle East and



Africa, DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation, said, "It is a collaboration platform where we bring together customers, partners, startups, and technology providers. We focus on customer-centric innovation — we never deploy technology for its own sake. We begin by understanding customer pain points and supply chain challenges, and through our showrooms, workshops, and expert ecosystem, we co-create solutions that directly address those needs."

The centre will act as a bridge between global abilities and the requirements of the Middle East and Africa. It allows the company to test



**Hennie Heymans**  
CEO  
DHL Express Sub-Saharan Africa



**Irina Albanese**  
Head of Innovation Middle East and Africa, DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation

We have announced several major investments, including an investment of US\$ 300 million in Africa

solutions that can work across borders, driven by automation, AI, robotics, or new digital tools. It also encourages startups in the region to plug into a wider network, ensuring innovation grows from within, not just from outside.

As DHL expands its presence from the Gulf region to Sub-Saharan Africa and strengthens links to major Asian markets, the company's message remains consistent: Growth must be met with readiness. The new centre reflects that readiness — a space built not just for technology, but for shaping the next phase of logistics in the world's most dynamic regions.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Speaking about the centre's sustainability initiatives, Irina added sustainability will be a key focus across all DHL Innovation Centres, supported by a dedicated showroom space showcasing different pathways to decarbonising logistics. The goal is to build awareness and show customers the solutions available today. While sustainable aviation fuel is one clear route, the strategy covers last-mile optimisation, supply chain efficiency, and advanced reporting tools. With the UAE

*It is a collaboration platform where we bring together customers, partners, startups, and technology providers*



introducing mandatory CO<sub>2</sub> reporting, many firms are likely to face challenges, and the centre aims to support them by showing how emissions across their logistics operations can be measured and reduced.

**MULTI-USER WAREHOUSE**  
Just a short distance away, the firm is preparing to build a 55,000 sqm multi-user warehouse, backed by a €120 million investment. Set to break ground in 2026, this facility will sit near the future Al Maktoum International Airport. The warehouse will run on net-zero carbon emissions, a step signalling DHL's intention

to push greener supply chains from the inside out.

"Our new multi-user warehouse in Dubai South's free zone strengthens our regional presence by bringing innovation and operations closer. Shaping the future of trade, this facility is designed to power global supply chains and will enhance DHL's ability to serve customers seeking shorter lead times. The site will act as a vital bridge between East and West. Our customers will benefit from integrated solutions and innovations that drive efficiency, sustainability, and growth across their entire supply chains," added Orkun Saruhanoglu, CEO, DHL Supply Chain Middle East & Africa.

Dubai South's role is central in linking these developments. Positioned as a rising global logistics hub, it offers the space, infra, and

regulatory support needed for such large-scale projects. DHL's confidence in this location is clear: Long-term land agreements, regional collaboration, and further investments in the Kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain all point to a strategy built for endurance, not quick wins.

Speaking about DHL's expansions, Hennie Heymans, CEO, DHL Express Sub-Saharan Africa, said, "The launch is proof of commitment of DHL's investment," he said. "We have announced several major investments, including an investment of US\$ 300 million in Africa."

The African market continues to stand out in DHL's global outlook. Highlighting rapid growth across the continent, Heymans emphasised the need to build resilience and capacity ahead of demand. For DHL, that means ensuring the right commercial and operational structures are in place before trade volumes accelerate. Securing capacity on key lanes and preparing teams for larger and faster movements of goods form the backbone of its strategy.

Together, the centre and the new warehouse form a logistics ecosystem where ideas and operations come together. They reflect a company readying itself for the future with supply chains that are smoother, greener, and more connected. 

### Innovation centre

- Brings together customers, startups, tech partners, academics, and DHL experts
- Focuses on customer-centric innovation and real logistics challenges
- Tests automation, AI, robotics, and digital tools
- Highlights pathways to decarbonise logistics
- Supports firms with CO<sub>2</sub> reporting and emissions reduction

### Warehouse

- Net-zero carbon operations
- Near Al Maktoum International Airport
- Construction starts in 2026, completes in 2027
- Acts as a contract logistics gateway between East and West
- Powers global supply chains and shortens lead times

# Daikin's Jeddah facility to alter supply chains across Gulf

In a fast-growing market like the Middle East, the efficiency of supply chains can make or break large-scale projects. Daikin is tackling this challenge by building a new manufacturing facility in Jeddah, designed to streamline logistics, reduce delivery times, and ensure cooling systems reach projects exactly when and where they are needed.

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The Jeddah manufacturing facility reflects a growing trend to localise production and reduce reliance on imports and supply chains. By producing cooling equipment close to key infra projects, Daikin can cut transportation times, optimise inventory management, and respond to evolving market needs. This is critical for large-scale developments, such as NEOM and the Red Sea Project, where prompt equipment delivery is essential for meeting construction schedules.

"With operations overseen by Daikin Applied Europe our new facility will ensure customers across the wider Gulf region receive products and solutions of the highest quality," said Claudio Capozio, COO, Daikin Applied Europe. "Delivering tangible benefits, including consistency, durability, and improving performance of



Claudio Capozio  
COO  
Daikin Applied Europe

products tailored to the region's demanding climate, the facility will enable us to respond to local market needs faster, helping us to power growth across the Middle East," he added.

The facility will adhere to Daikin's PDS standards, which integrate lean production, quality control, and continuous improvement. These practices ensure product reliability, energy efficiency, and support

*The facility will enable us to respond to local market needs faster, helping us to power growth across the ME*

predictable and efficient logistics ops. Advanced on-site testing labs and factory acceptance testing will reduce the risk of delays caused by product defects or re-work, allowing smoother coordination between manufacturing, distribution, and deployment.

Building on previous investments, the Jeddah facility strengthens Daikin's regional logistics network. Local production minimises cross-border transportation, reduces customs complexities, and lowers shipping costs, while enhancing

the firm's ability to manage large-scale orders for commercial, industrial, and govt clients.

The plant supports the KSA's Vision 2030 by easing energy-efficient infrastructure projects and fostering local employment thus ensuring a skilled workforce is available for maintaining operations and supporting regional distribution. By aligning production capabilities with market demand, Daikin is improving supply chain agility and reliability, ensuring that project timelines and customer expectations are met consistently.

With this expansion, Daikin will increase manufacturing capacity and optimise its logistics and distribution network across the Middle East. The Jeddah facility positions the company to respond faster to market demands, reduce delivery lead times, and provide a seamless supply chain solution for complex projects, reinforcing its commitment to efficiency, quality, and regional growth. ☀



# DP World to update Afghanistan's key trade border gateways

Afghanistan's role as a regional transit corridor could soon improve, with DP World signing a new pact to upgrade two major border points handling products worth billions of dollars each year. The upgrades may make the cargo movement faster and more predictable, strengthening the country's trade links with neighbouring regions.

CT Bureau

**D**P World has reached an agreement with the Government of Afghanistan to develop and manage two key land borders — Torkham and Hairatan. These gateways manage a large share of Afghanistan's cargo — goods headed to and from Pakistan and Central Asia. Pakistan alone accounted for US\$ 1.6 billion in bilateral trade last year.

Together, the gateways serve as major cargo routes, with goods worth billions of dollars crossing borders each year. But despite the heavy movements of cargo, both gateways rely on outdated systems, limited infrastructure, and slow manual processes, which hold back faster, more efficient cargo movement.

For years, traders and transport firms have faced delays due to long queues, unpredictable clearance times, and outdated infrastructure. These delays



His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem  
Chairman and Group CEO  
DP World

added cost to supply chains and made it harder for Afghanistan to position itself as a stable transit route in the region. While trade volumes grew, the infrastructure, unfortunately, has been absent.

His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman and Group CEO, DP World, said, "Efficient trade corridors are fundamental to economic resilience. These gateways sup-

port more trade flows and modernising them will help unlock greater potential across the region. We believe well-managed border infrastructure can create pathways to stability and opportunity. We are committed to supporting Afghanistan for building a prosperous future."

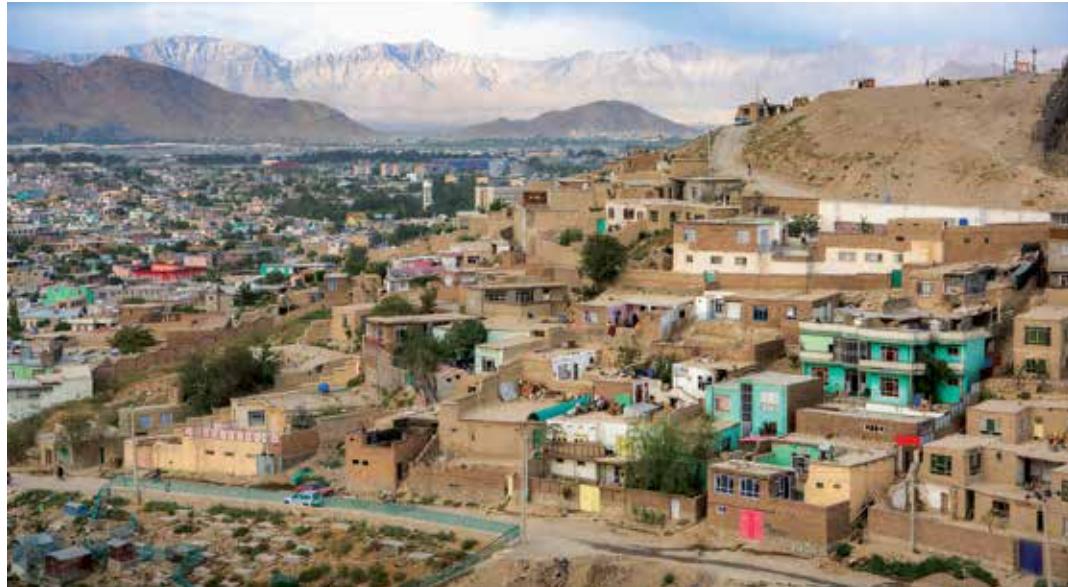
The new agreement aims to push these border points into a modern, logistics-friendly era. DP World will start a comprehensive technical and financial feasibility study to map out what upgrades are needed before final concession terms are finalised — layouts for improved truck movement, upgraded cargo-handling equipment, and digital systems to replace time-consuming paperwork. If implemented, these changes could reduce border bottlenecks and allow goods to move faster.

The upgrade is likely to help Afghanistan strengthen its role as a link between Central and South Asia, something the

*Together, the gateways serve as major cargo routes, with goods worth billions of dollars crossing borders each year*

country has been aiming for long, but struggled to achieve due to the infrastructure gaps. The project will also prioritise local employment, skills development, and close collaboration with national partners.

While DP World will take charge of developing and managing the facilities, Afghan authorities will continue to oversee customs, immigration, and security. For the logistics sector, the move signals a step toward smoother cross-border trade in a region where delays have been the norm for decades.





# Road to zero emissions: Maersk, Unilever introduce EVs

As Saudi Arabia pushes forward with Vision 2030, the Kingdom is seeing growth in e-commerce, logistics, and supply chain activity. While logistics is essential for a growing economy, there is a need for solutions that reduce environmental impact. One significant way forward is the adoption of electric vehicles for last-mile delivery.

CT Bureau

Global logistics leader, Maersk and consumer goods giant, Unilever have launched their first electric van (EV) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, marking a leap in decarbonising the logistics sector. The initiative aligns with Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to reduce emissions by 278 million tonnes annually and increase renewable energy usage to 50 per cent, highlighting the collaborative strength of the Maersk–Unilever partnership.

"This is the first EV deployment in our fleet, and it is our commitment to reduce logistics-related emissions wherever possible. By improving efficiency and cutting emissions, we strengthen sustainability while delivering greater value to our customers," said Ahmed Kadous, Head, Customer Operations, Unilever Middle East.

The EV will serve the BinDawood Group, one of Unilever's key retail partners,



Ahmed El Esseily  
Managing Director  
Maersk Saudi Arabia

running within a 50-km radius and covering up to 3,500 km per month. This rollout follows the consolidation of Unilever's warehouses into a single fulfilment centre at Maersk's Logistics Park in Jeddah. The park features a 64,000 sqm rooftop solar plant and an advanced cooling system, enabling a 5 per cent reduction in emissions even before van deployment. The EV, combined with solar-powered charging infrastructure, allows net-zero emissions compared to

*The EV supports efficiency in last-mile logistics, reduces fuel consumption, operating costs & environmental impact*

conventional trucks. It supports efficiency in last-mile logistics, reducing fuel consumption, operating costs, and environmental impact.

Highlighting the move towards green logistics, Ahmed El Esseily, MD, Maersk Saudi Arabia said, "As EV technology advances and charging infra expands, we are seeing more opportunities to deploy emission-free trucks in place of diesel units. We are proud to partner with forward-thinking customers, such as Unilever, committed to decarbonising logistics solutions and delivering value."

Both companies are exploring innovations to expand electric mobility across Saudi operations. As EV tech advances, operators can replace diesel units with emission-free trucks. This shows how sustainability and efficiency can go together, positioning Maersk and Unilever at the forefront of green logistics in the Middle East. 

## GREEN LOGISTICS IN KSA

- ❖ Saudi Vision 2030 aims to reach 50% renewable energy usage
- ❖ Jeddah Logistics Park has a 64k sqm solar rooftop
- ❖ Emissions down 5%
- ❖ Project combines EVs, solar power to make last-mile logistics greener

# New logistics facility ups Dubai South's e-commerce game

E-commerce is booming, and so is the need for smarter, more efficient warehouses. Dubai has responded quickly to this demand by adding a new fully equipped facility to its landscape, further expanding the city's capability to handle fast-growing online retail operations.

CT Bureau

**D**ubai has reinforced its position as a key hub for trade, logistics, and supply chain activity. As one of the main drivers of e-commerce growth in the region, the city continues to expand its capabilities to meet rising customer demands and strengthen global standing. In line with this momentum, Dubai South has welcomed another player to its growing logistics ecosystem by opening a new, fully equipped warehouse facility by INDU Kishore Logistics in the Logistics District.

This development highlights the district's expanding role as a central hub for e-commerce and supply chain operations in the UAE. The new warehouse covers around 23,000 sqm and can store up to 75,000 pallets. With a height of 22 metres, it is built for high volume, fast-moving operations. What makes the facility stand is its focus on automation and data-driven processes. The setup is designed to speed up handling times and keep goods flowing smoothly — critical for today's e-commerce market where every hour matters.

"We are pleased to welcome INDU Kishore Logistics to our growing ecosystem. Their new facility reflects the increasing demand for advanced logistics capabilities in Dubai South, driven by our integrated infrastructure and seamless connectivity. We stay committed to enabling our partners with the ideal environment to expand, innovate, and support our leadership's vision of positioning Dubai

as a global logistics hub," said Mohsen Ahmad, CEO, Logistics District, Dubai South.

The Logistics District continues to attract firms that function close to an airport, a seaport, and major road networks. With its infrastructure and flexible business environment, it gives logistics operators the ability to scale quickly. INDU Kishore Logistics is the latest to tap into that advantage as the sector shifts toward technology-enabled fulfilment.

## STRATEGIC LOCATION

The new warehouse reflects increasing demand from companies looking for advanced logistics spaces that are connected to major gateways. For

*The warehouse covers 23,000 sqm and can store up to 75,000 pallets. It is built for high volume, fast-moving operations*



Kishore Lakhani, Chairman of INDU Group and Mohsen Ahmad, CEO of the Logistics District at Dubai South

operators, this means easier movement of goods, fewer bottlenecks, and better access to regional and global markets.

INDU Group stated the choice of Dubai South was intentional, as the location offers strategic value and operational efficiency. Completing the project within a specific timeline highlights the coordination between the company and the master developer, allowing ops to begin without delays.

The Logistics District sits at the centre of a wider ecosystem built around air, land, and sea connectivity. It links directly to Jebel Ali Port through a bonded corridor and has



access to cargo terminals at Al Maktoum International Airport. The district also includes EZDubai, a specialised e-commerce zone, and the Contract Logistics Zone, which supports varied supply chain needs. As e-commerce continues to expand in the region, facilities like this one will play a major role in helping companies move goods faster, cut costs, and keep reliable service across markets.

## AT A GLANCE

- ❖ New facility covers 23,000 sqm
- ❖ Storage capacity of up to 75,000 pallets
- ❖ 22-metre height designed for high-volume, fast-moving operations
- ❖ Equipped with automation and data-driven workflows
- ❖ Enables faster handling, quicker dispatch, and smooth shipment flow



# SILZ, SAL, DHL to drive e-commerce growth in KSA

KSA logistics is seeing a massive boost, with regional and global players expanding their footprint. With SAL Logistics Services partnering with SILZ, and DHL Supply Chain investing in a new multi-user distribution hub, the e-commerce and tech sectors are set to enjoy faster, more efficient supply chains and improved access to regional and global markets.

CT Bureau

**E**-commerce and trade are fast growing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and logistics infrastructure is evolving to keep pace. At the heart of this transformation is Riyadh Integrated, the Kingdom's first fully integrated logistics zone, developed by the Special Integrated Logistics Zone Company (SILZ). The zone brings together warehousing, cargo handling,

and supply chain services in a single connected ecosystem, designed to make it easier for businesses to move goods efficiently across the Kingdom and beyond.

The latest step in Riyadh Integrated evolution is its partnership with SAL Logistics Services, a leading national provider of cargo handling and supply chain solutions. The collaboration links SILZ's latest infrastructure along

*Companies handling normal or complex cargo can now rely on a smoother flow of goods, better planning, and more efficient operations*

with SAL's expertise, giving businesses within the zone seamless access to end-to-end logistics services. This helps shipments move faster, streamline processes, and provide companies with reliable connectivity to domestic and global markets.

"Our vision for Riyadh Integrated is to be the ultimate, one-stop shop for global companies seeking efficiency, speed, and strategic access.



This strategic cooperation with SAL is a game changer. It means that the smart infrastructure and customs privileges enjoyed within Riyadh Integrated are seamlessly linked to SAL's extensive network of air cargo handling and specialised logistics services across the Kingdom. This partnership reinforces the 'speed to market' advantage SILZ Company offers," said Dr Fadi Al-Buhairan, CEO, SILZ Company.

With Riyadh Integrated right at the centre of a transport network spanning air, land, and sea, it offers access to key airports and ports. Connecting Riyadh Integrated's smart infrastructure with SAL's extensive network, the partnership reduces friction in supply chains and shortens transit times for high-volume shipments. Companies handling normal or complex cargo can now rely on a smoother flow of goods, better planning, and more efficient operations.



*Sitting: Mostapha Mokdad, Managing Director, DHL Supply Chain KSA (left), and Khalid AlOtaishan, Commercial Director, SILZ (right). Standing (left to right): Dr Fadi AlBuhairan, Chief Executive Officer, SILZ; Talal Alotaibi, Commercial Manager, SILZ; and Peter Schuijlenburg, Head of Real Estate Solutions EMEA, DHL Supply Chain*

Besides, it includes specialised zones for e-commerce and contract logistics, giving companies flexibility and operational efficiency that few other hubs can match. As the Kingdom strengthens its position as a global trade and logistics centre, the SILZ-SAL partnership highlights how connected infrastructure and expert logistics services can help companies operate faster, reduce delays, and expand reach. Together, Riyadh Integrated

retail, consumer, automotive, energy, and e-commerce, providing tailored solutions for each industry. Construction is scheduled to begin in Q1 of 2026, with completion expected by Q2 of 2027. The new warehouse is part of the €500 million investment DHL Group has recently announced for the Middle East through 2030.

"The Middle East is one of the fastest-growing logistics regions globally, and KSA sits at

the centre of this transformation. Our approach is to invest ahead of demand, creating scalable infrastructure supporting high-growth sectors such as technology, e-commerce, and new energy. Our new multi-user facility at SILZ will accelerate supply chain resilience and connectivity and enable global businesses to migrate their distribution centres to the Kingdom, positioning them to thrive in a market that is becoming a true gateway between Asia, Europe, and Africa," said Hendrik Venter, CEO, DHL Supply Chain.

In addition, the facility is situated 8 km from King Khalid International Airport and connected via a bonded corridor. The new facility offers unparalleled proximity to global air routes, ensures faster lead times, and seamless access to and from the Middle East's largest consumer market — supporting efficient inbound flows and enabling the growing outbound export trade.



*Dr Fadi Al-Buhairan, PhD, CEO of the Special Integrated Logistics Zone Company and Omar Talal Hariri, CEO of SAL Saudi Logistics Services at the signing*

and SAL are building a logistics ecosystem that supports growth, efficiency, and innovation across the Kingdom.

### DHL'S EXPANSION

Building on the momentum of supporting KSA's e-commerce and logistics boom, DHL Supply Chain is investing €130 million (SAR 561.5 million) to set up a new regional logistics and distribution hub at SILZ in Riyadh.

The new facility will occupy a 78,000 sqm plot, including leasehold commitments for a 26-year term: This multi-user warehouse will cater to diverse sectors including technology,

#### SILZ & SAL Partnership

- Connects Riyadh Integrated with SAL's logistics network
- Provides seamless end-to-end supply chain solutions
- Speeds up shipments and streamlines operations
- Improves connectivity to local and global markets
- Supports high-volume and complex cargo flows

#### DHL Investment

- €130 million (SAR 561.5 million) multi-user hub
- 78,000 sqm land, 53,000 sqm built-up, 26-year lease
- Serves e-commerce, tech, retail, automotive, and energy sectors
- 8 km from King Khalid International Airport; bonded corridor access
- Enhances lead times, supply chain resilience, and regional connectivity

# UAE's aviation logistics to undergo massive makeover

While keeping aircraft and choppers mission-ready depends on efficient logistics, Honeywell is stepping up partnerships with Abu Dhabi Aviation and GAL to manage the logistics chain and reduce downtime for military and civil fleets. The partnership aims to alter how repairs and overhauls are handled, ensure faster turnaround, and improve visibility.



(Second from left) Abdelrahman AlHammadi, Acting CEO of GAL; Mike Vallillo, vice president, Defense & Space International, Honeywell Aerospace Technologies and others at the signing between Honeywell and GAL

CT Bureau

**R**educing downtime is crucial for military and civil aviation. Honeywell is taking steps to streamline maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) support in the UAE by partnering with Global Aerospace Logistics (GAL) and Abu Dhabi Aviation. These two recent agreements highlight Honeywell's focus on creating a faster, more transparent logistics network that simplifies complex repair processes and keeps aircraft and helicopters operational across the region.

In the first agreement, Honeywell teamed up with GAL for a three-year partnership to manage end-to-end logistics for the UAE's Joint Aviation Command (JAC) and Air Force and Air Defense (AFAD). GAL takes responsibility for the logistics chain, from selecting the

suitable Honeywell repair facilities to overseeing shipments and tracking components throughout the repair process. By handling these critical steps, GAL ensures faster turnaround times and improves operational readiness for the military fleet. Honeywell continues to provide technical support and repairs its T55 turboshaft engines and environmental control systems, but the addition of GAL's logistics ability allows military operators to rely on a smoother and fully integrated support system.

*Managing the repair pipeline provides visibility and faster delivery for critical components*





Abdelrahman AlHammadi, Acting CEO, GAL, emphasised that managing the repair pipeline provides visibility and faster delivery for critical components. Mike Vallillo, Vice President, Defense & Space International, Honeywell Aerospace Technologies, said the

partnership removes delays and introduces an efficient repair and logistics model for the region.

Honeywell's collaboration with Abu Dhabi Aviation focuses on AW139 helicopters, widely used across the Middle

East and Africa in military, civil, and oil and gas operations. Under the new agreement, operators no longer need to send parts to Honeywell factories abroad. Instead, Abu Dhabi Aviation's logistics network will manage the full MRO chain, including choosing repair facilities, shipping components, and monitoring the entire process until completion. This ensures faster repairs, while maintaining quality standards within Honeywell's global service network.

Mike Vallillo noted this expanded logistics support reduces the burden on UAE customers, making complex repairs faster and easier. By localising the supply chain, Honeywell and Abu Dhabi Aviation aim to increase fleet readiness for

critical sectors, ensuring that helicopters remain operational when they are most needed.

Both agreements build on decade-long partnerships. Together, these initiatives reflect a broader push to streamline aviation logistics in the UAE, combining technical ability with regional management to accelerate repair cycles, reduce downtime, and improve overall operational efficiency.

By integrating repair and logistics, Honeywell is helping UAE operators maintain mission-ready fleets, while simplifying the most complex aspects of aviation operations: moving, repairing, and returning critical aircraft components efficiently. 



#### Streamlined logistics

- Honeywell partners with GAL and Abu Dhabi Aviation
- End-to-end logistics management for military and civil aircraft
- Faster repair turnaround and reduced downtime
- Full visibility and tracking of parts

#### Enhanced fleet readiness

- Local MRO support for helicopters and aircraft
- Integrated logistics and technical expertise
- Improved operational efficiency and mission readiness
- Reduced reliance on overseas repair facilities

# Self-driving delivery solutions for e-commerce logistics

With urban congestion and emissions on the rise, Abu Dhabi is exploring ways and means to make the city logistics cleaner and more efficient. The emirate's rollout of autonomous delivery vehicles is set to transform last-mile deliveries, speeding up shipments, reducing road traffic, and creating a smarter, more sustainable logistics network.

CT Bureau

Abu Dhabi is stepping into the future of logistics with a new pilot project for autonomous e-commerce delivery vehicles. Spearheaded by the Integrated Transport Centre (ITC) and supervised by the Smart and Autonomous Systems Council (SASC), the initiative is a collaboration with e-commerce platform "noon" and AutoGo, a subsidiary of K2. By integrating self-driving vehicles into existing delivery networks, the project aims to make urban logistics faster, more efficient, and more sustainable.

Faraz Khalid, CEO, noon, said, "noon aims to redefine the future of e-commerce through innovation, and our partnership with the ITC and AutoGo is a vital step towards



Faraz Khalid  
CEO  
noon

developing autonomous delivery solutions that improve the efficiency and sustainability of logistics services."

The autonomous vehicles, equipped with AI and advanced sensors, can navigate city streets safely, while delivering orders directly to mini-fulfilment centres and customers without

human intervention. For logistics operations, this technology promises smoother flows, shorter delivery times, and a reduction in road congestion — a challenge in growing urban markets, such as Abu Dhabi.

The pilot reflects a broader trend of merging e-commerce and smart mobility. By automating last-mile delivery, firms could optimise supply chains, reduce reliance on manual drivers, and improve consistency in service. The vehicles help lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, supporting the Emirate's sustainability goals. ITC has set ambitious targets, aiming for 25 per cent of all trips in Abu Dhabi to be conducted via smart transport solutions by 2040, and autonomous deliveries are expected to play a pivotal role in this vision.

From a business perspective, the project shows how technology can enhance operational efficiency. Faster deliveries mean products move seamlessly from warehouses to fulfilment centres, improving inventory turnover and enabling retailers to respond more quickly to demand fluctuations. For customers, the result is prompt service — an important differentiator in competitive e-commerce markets.

ITC and its partners plan to expand the pilot to add more neighbourhoods and introduce a wider range of products, eventually scaling to full commercial operations. The project highlights the potential of public-private collaboration transforming logistics ecosystems, combining regulatory oversight with technological innovation.

*Autonomous vehicles, equipped with AI and advanced sensors, can navigate city streets safely, while delivering orders directly*

By blending autonomous mobility, e-commerce, and smart city infrastructure, Abu Dhabi is positioning itself as a regional hub for innovative logistics. The pilot proves the future of supply chains is not just faster but more efficient — it is smarter, greener, and fully integrated with urban transport systems.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ AI and advanced sensors enable safe navigation without drivers
- ❖ Shorter delivery times and smoother supply chain flows
- ❖ Reduced road congestion and lower carbon emissions
- ❖ Supports Abu Dhabi's goal: 25% of trips via smart transport by 2040
- ❖ Greener last-mile delivery with automated logistics

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- + FIATA arbitration code
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## Etihad Cargo rolls out safer air transport for vehicles

Etihad Cargo has unveiled 'FlightValet Light & Heavy Vehicle Restraint Kit,' setting a benchmark for secure car transport by air. This innovative system secures vehicles over the wheels, eliminating any contact with the rims. The approach ensures that the load is distributed evenly, providing maximum stability. With this service, customers can transport their vehicles with confidence, knowing that safety, precision, and peace of mind are fully covered. By focusing on vehicle integrity and careful handling, Etihad Cargo positions itself as a leader in high-standard vehicle logistics. The new FlightValet system is available for light as well as heavy vehicles.



## Global partnerships, new zones drive Saudi air cargo



According to GACA, Saudi airports managed 866,000 tonnes of cargo between January and September 2025. Much of this momentum comes from Saudia Cargo, which has broadened its global reach through new partnerships with TAM Group, WFS, Cainiao, China Cargo Airlines, and FedEx. Ahmed Al-Hassan, Assistant Minister, Transport and Logistics, said Saudi aviation is "providing unprecedented investment opportunities for the global aviation sector in support of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 agenda". These collaborations have enhanced freight capacity and connectivity across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

## OAC strengthens cargo reach with new global partnerships

Oman Air has expanded its global reach by signing five new GSA partnerships, introducing two offline routes to Australia and Japan. The new offline routes will be handled by Australia Cargo and World Prime Services, while three more GSAs — Al Madinah Travel Company, MGH Logistics, and APG — will manage online routes to Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. The airline said the expansion reflects momentum for its cargo ops and will allow Oman Air to serve customers better. Michael Duggan, Head, Cargo, Oman Air, believes the partnerships will strengthen the airline's global network. The new GSA contracts are set for two years, while many existing contracts have been renewed. To celebrate the milestone, Oman Air hosted 27 representatives from its GSA network at an event in Muscat, underscoring the importance of collaboration in expanding its cargo services.

## SolitAir strengthens cargo ops across Global South



SolitAir has reinforced its position as a cargo connector for the Global South, underscoring a growing network of partnerships built on the promise of reliability. As demand for faster, more secure cargo movements rises, the airline is strengthening links between key trade lanes, offering businesses a dependable lifeline for time-critical and condition-sensitive shipments. With an expanding fleet and enhanced operational capabilities, SolitAir is streamlining transit times and boosting service consistency for customers operating in high-growth regions.

## Emirates SkyCargo delivers Arab Satellite to Shanghai

Emirates SkyCargo, working with the National Space Science and Technology Center (NSSTC) at UAE University, has transported Arab Satellite 813 from Al Ain to Shanghai, China. The satellite, designed to monitor earth, climate, and the environment, was moved to Dubai World Central before being flown on a Boeing 777F, said Badr Abbas, DSVP, Emirates SkyCargo. The operation involved strict environmental controls, high security, and precise coordination across multiple stakeholders. Arab Satellite 813 is part of the UAE's broader initiative, under His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, to enhance Arab cooperation in space and involve regional scientists in cutting-edge research, Abbas said. Ali Al



Shehhi, Director, NSSTC, described the satellite as a milestone in Arab space collaboration and a step toward training national talent for the future of space technologies.



## Cargojet expands direct cargo services to Europe

Cargojet is expanding its network to Europe with a new direct air cargo service connecting Canada to Liege Airport, Belgium. The route provides faster, more reliable options, while linking Canada's key cargo centres with European markets. "The partnership represents a major step forward for the LGG community and for Europe–Canada logistics, unlocking new potential and connectivity for our customers and partners," said Torsten Wefers, VP Marketing & Sales, Liege Airport. Initially operating once a week, plans are in place to increase frequency as demand grows. Liege Airport, known for its cargo expertise, becomes a key node in Cargojet's transatlantic operations.



## IAG Cargo begins handling MASkargo at Heathrow



IAG Cargo has started managing MASkargo's shipments at its London Heathrow hub, processing all cargo through the airline's Premia facility. The move strengthens IAG Cargo's global handling capabilities and highlights Heathrow's role as a key node in global air freight. Through the partnership, MASkargo gains access to Heathrow's location, efficient airside operations, and modern infrastructure, enabling smoother transfers and improved connectivity across Europe and the Americas. IAG Cargo benefits from expanding its third-party handling services and reinforcing its position as a reliable partner for global carriers.

## Frankfurt, Shanghai Pudong airports deepen cooperation

Frankfurt Airport and Shanghai Pudong International have formalised a new partnership. The pact comes at a time when air cargo demand between Asia and Europe continues to rise. The airports plan to share information, coordinate on regulatory processes, and explore ways to speed up the movement of goods — creating a joint mechanism for quicker communication and problem-solving during operational disruptions as well as organising roadshows to engage stakeholders. The goal is to make handling predictable and reduce bottlenecks on routes linking China and Europe. Frankfurt Airport sees the cooperation as part of its wider CargoHub Masterplan, aiming to keep the airport competitive as global trade patterns evolve. For Shanghai Pudong, the partnership offers an opportunity to align standards and improve overall efficiency between the two markets.

## Silk Way West Airlines adds two more Airbus A350Fs

Silk Way West Airlines is expanding its fleet with two additional Airbus A350Fs. "We are delighted to extend our partnership with Airbus. This order, bringing our total commitment to four aircraft, marks a milestone in our company's growth and reflects our confidence in the future of sustainable air freight. The A350F will strengthen our leading position in the global air freight market as we continue to modernise our fleet and reduce our carbon footprint," said Wolfgang Meier, President, Silk Way West Airlines. In June 2022, the airline became the first operator in the Central Asia and CIS region to adopt A350Fs. The aircraft is designed to meet upcoming CO<sub>2</sub> emissions standards and reduces fuel consumption and emissions by up to 40 per cent. The freighters will support Silk Way West's growing role as a global air cargo operator and bolster Azerbaijan's position as a regional logistics hub.



## China Cargo Airlines adds Paris–Shanghai freighter link

China Cargo Airlines has expanded its European network with a new freighter service between Paris Charles de Gaulle and Shanghai Pudong, responding to steady trade growth between China and France. The route is operated with Boeing 777Fs three times a week. The airline aims to move machinery, electronics, and apparel into France, while chemicals and industrial raw materials are expected to make up much of the return load to China. Paris will function as a distribution point, with the carrier planning to feed shipments into other European destinations through its road feeder transport partners. The cooperation builds on a long-standing relationship of more than two decades. China Cargo recently added four Boeing



777Fs to its fleet and now operates 18 with at least one more on order. The Paris link follows new routes opened earlier in 2025, as the carrier strengthens its hold in Europe.



# Upcoming Events 2026



EVENT NAME	DATE	VENUE
<b>JANUARY</b>		
RISE Expo	13	Dubai, UAE
Transports & Logistics Storage Meetings	19–21	Cannes, France
IOSA Operator Workshop	21–22	Dubai, UAE
Logistics & Automation Switzerland	28	Bern, Switzerland
Thai Cargo Expo	28	Bangkok, Thailand
<b>February</b>		
iFX EXPO – Dubai	10	Dubai, UAE
Sustainable Aviation Futures MENA Congress	10	Dubai, UAE
Air Cargo Conference 2026	14–17	Orlando, USA
air cargo India	24–27	Mumbai, India
<b>March</b>		
AirportIS Forum	2	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
LogiMAT 2026	7	Stuttgart, Germany
CargoIS Forum 2026	5–6	Miami, USA
World Cargo Symposium	10–12	Lima, Peru
Philippine Ports and Logistics 2026	11	Manila, Philippines
<b>April</b>		
World Data Symposium	8–9	Singapore
LogiPharma	14–17	Vienna, Austria
Military Aviation Logistics & Maintenance Symposium	21–23	Orlando, USA

EVENT NAME	DATE	VENUE
Logimotion 2026	21–23	Dubai World Trade Center, UAE
Nordic Air Cargo Symposium 2026	27–28	Riga, Latvia
Mediterranean Ports and Logistics 2026	28–30	Porto, Portugal
<b>May</b>		
Integrated Inventory and Warehouse Management Course	4–8	Dubai, UAE
International Conference on Logistics	7–8	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
14 <sup>th</sup> GLA Global Logistics Conference	8	Shenzhen, China
Aviation Energy Forum	12–14	Paris, France
Airport Show	12	Dubai, UAE
Transpotec Logitec	13–16	Milan, Italy
CNS Partnership Conference	18–20	San Francisco, USA
Logistec Show	13–14	Santiago, Chile
<b>June</b>		
TIACA Executive Summit	1	Warsaw, Poland
AGM 2026–IATA	6–8	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
158 <sup>th</sup> IATA Slot Conference	9–11	Bangkok, Thailand
transport logistic & air cargo China	24–26	Shanghai, China
<b>July</b>		
Logistics Automation Expo	1–3	Bangkok, Thailand

EVENT NAME	DATE	VENUE	EVENT NAME	DATE	VENUE
ASEAN Ports and Logistics 2026	8	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	TransLogistica Kazakhstan	14–16	Almaty, Kazakhstan
Industrial Automation & Logistics	15–18	Surabaya, Indonesia	TIACA Air Cargo Forum (ACF)	26–29	Miami Beach, USA
Farnborough Air Show	20	Farnborough, UK	Aviation Connect	26–29	London, UK
Vietnam International Logistics Exhibition	30 July–1 Aug	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam	<b>November</b>		
<b>August</b>			Project Cargo Network Annual Summit	15–17	Muscat, Oman
TILOG LOGISTIX	19–21	Bangkok, Thailand	logitrans & air cargo Türkiye	11–13	Istanbul, Türkiye
Taipei Logistics	19–22	Taipei, Taiwan	transport logistic Türkiye	11–13	Istanbul, Türkiye
SupplyPlus	20–22	New Delhi, India	Retail Supply Chain & Logistics Expo	11–12	London, UK
Logmat Sri Lanka	Aug 2026	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Global Supply Chain Forum 2026	Nov	Saudi Arabia
Air Cargo Middle East Expo	30 Aug–1 Sept	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	Logistics Leaders MENA	25	Dubai, UAE
<b>September</b>			Arabian Cargo Awards	TBC	Dubai, UAE
Saudi Warehousing & Logistics Expo	1	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	<b>December</b>		
Wings of Change Middle East & North Africa	8–9	Manama, Bahrain	Supply Chain Event	1–2	Paris, France
EU Cross-Border E-Commerce Forum	8–10	Liege, Belgium	GITEX Global (TechCation)	7–11	Dubai, UAE
Cargo Experts Conference	22–24	Budapest, Hungary	International Conference on Sustainable Development in Logistics & Supply Chain	9–11	Istanbul, Türkiye
LogiChain Expo	22–24	Warsaw, Poland	Global Airports Forum	TBC	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Inter Aviation Arabia	29	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia			
<b>October</b>					
Fresh Food Logistics	6–9	Madrid, Spain			
Logistics Summit	7–8	Düsseldorf, Germany			
Logistech Izmir Expo	7–9	Izmir, Turkey			

For more information contact:

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

# Movements



## CHAMP CARGOSYSTEMS

### Contern, Luxembourg

Gianluca Marcangelo has been appointed VP, Neo Programme Engagement, CHAMP Cargosystems. In his new role, he will guide airlines through digital transformation. With an experience of 25 years, Marcangelo has served in Oman Air, Challenge Group, and Global GSA Group.



## ASR CARGO

### Copenhagen, Denmark

Ali Senhaji has joined as CEO of ASR Cargo Centre's operations at Copenhagen Airport, marking a step in the company's Nordic growth plans. Senhaji's experience in handling, operational excellence, and stakeholder engagement will help efforts to expand services and meet the demand for efficient cargo solutions across Europe.



## MAERSK

### Mumbai, India

Thomas Theeuwes has been appointed as Managing Director for India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. He brings 20 years of global experience, recently having served as Managing Director for West Africa since 2024. In his new role, Theeuwes looks forward to working with the team to strengthen Maersk's position as a logistics partner.



## DHL GLOBAL FORWARDING

### Bonn, Germany

Henk Venema is the new Executive VP, Global Airfreight, DHL Global Forwarding. He brings 20 years of experience to his new role. Known for operational expertise, Venema has knowledge across carriers, capacity management, service quality, and pricing.



## CARGOJET

### Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Pauline Dhillon has been appointed CEO of Cargojet. A founding partner of Cargojet, Dhillon has been with the company for 24 years. Her appointment positions Cargojet to accelerate expansion into European and Asian markets. She has been instrumental in building a strong, effective leadership team to support Cargojet's continued growth.



## ECS GROUP

### Paris, France

Girish Kunder joined as RM, Indian Subcontinent at ECS Group. In his new role, he will oversee operations across India and nearby markets through Globe Air Cargo and AVS, focusing on partnerships, market expansion, and digital transformation to drive efficiency. With expertise in the region, he will position ECS Group as the preferred GSSA partner.



## KUEHNE + NAGEL

### UK

Aaron Scott has been appointed National Manager – the UK, Kuehne+Nagel. Bringing three decades of experience, he will focus on strengthening Kuehne+Nagel's UK market position and driving business growth. Known for delivering results and leading large-scale projects, Scott aims to enhance operational resilience in the UK market.



## CARGOAI

### Singapore

Wayne Tyndall has joined CargoAi as the Strategic Advisor. Tyndall is experienced in air cargo and digital freight. In his new role, he will support CargoAi on organisational scaling, product excellence, and customer-centric innovation. He has begun advising the team on strategy, growth, and product development.



## SKYLINK CARGO SERVICES

is pleased to announce its appointment as cargo GSA for



Operating Daily Wide Body Aircraft from Dubai to Kabul

Flight No.	From	To	Dep.	Arr.	Days	Aircraft
RQ902	DXB	KBL	0300	0615	Daily	A340

Acceptable Dimensions: 315\*215\*157cms/1900 kgs per piece

Cargo handover accepted in DXB or DWC

**Contact us for rates, space and booking confirmations**

[sales@skylinkcargoservices.com](mailto:sales@skylinkcargoservices.com)



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It's never just an address,  
which is why we go beyond borders with our partners to deliver