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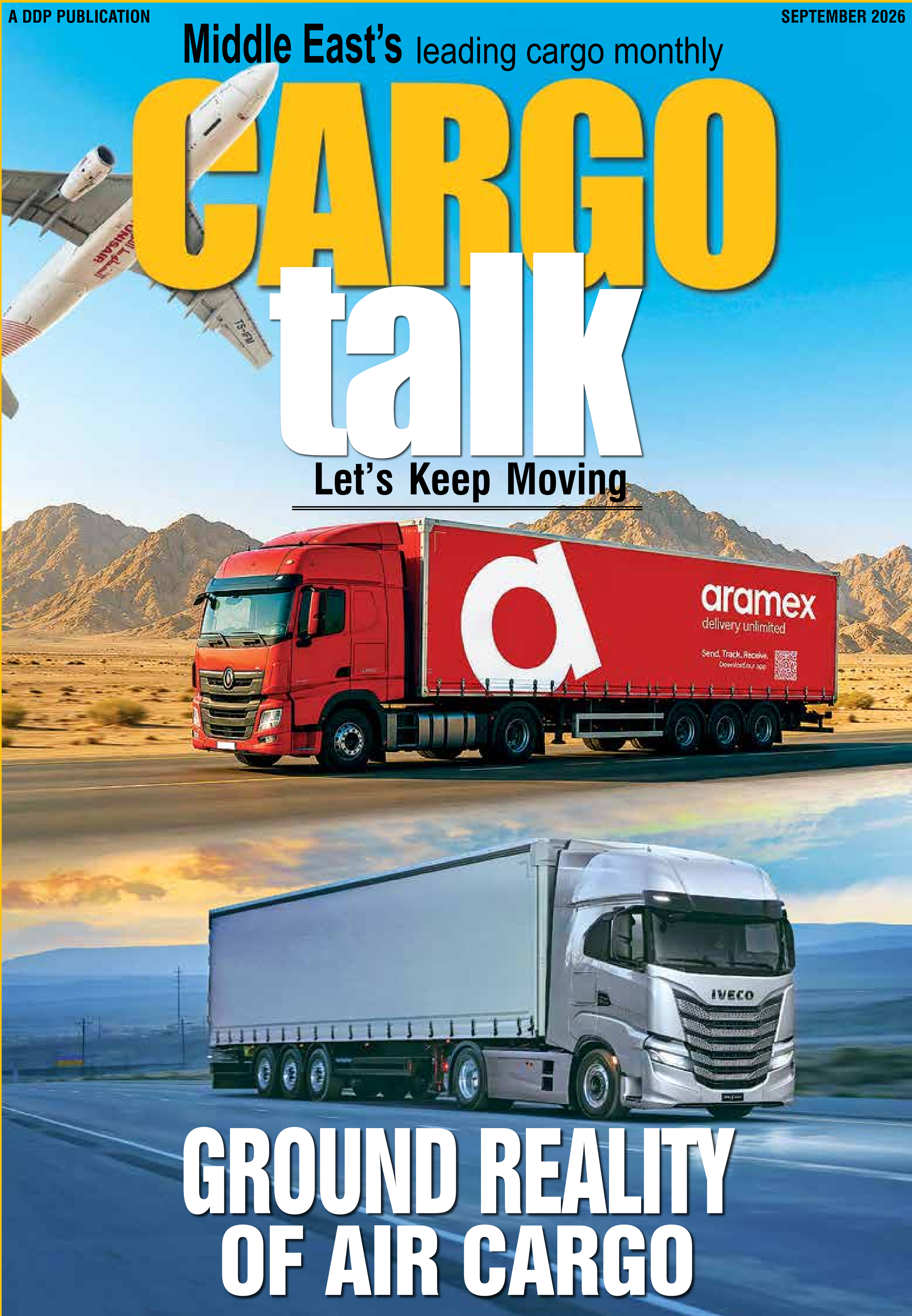

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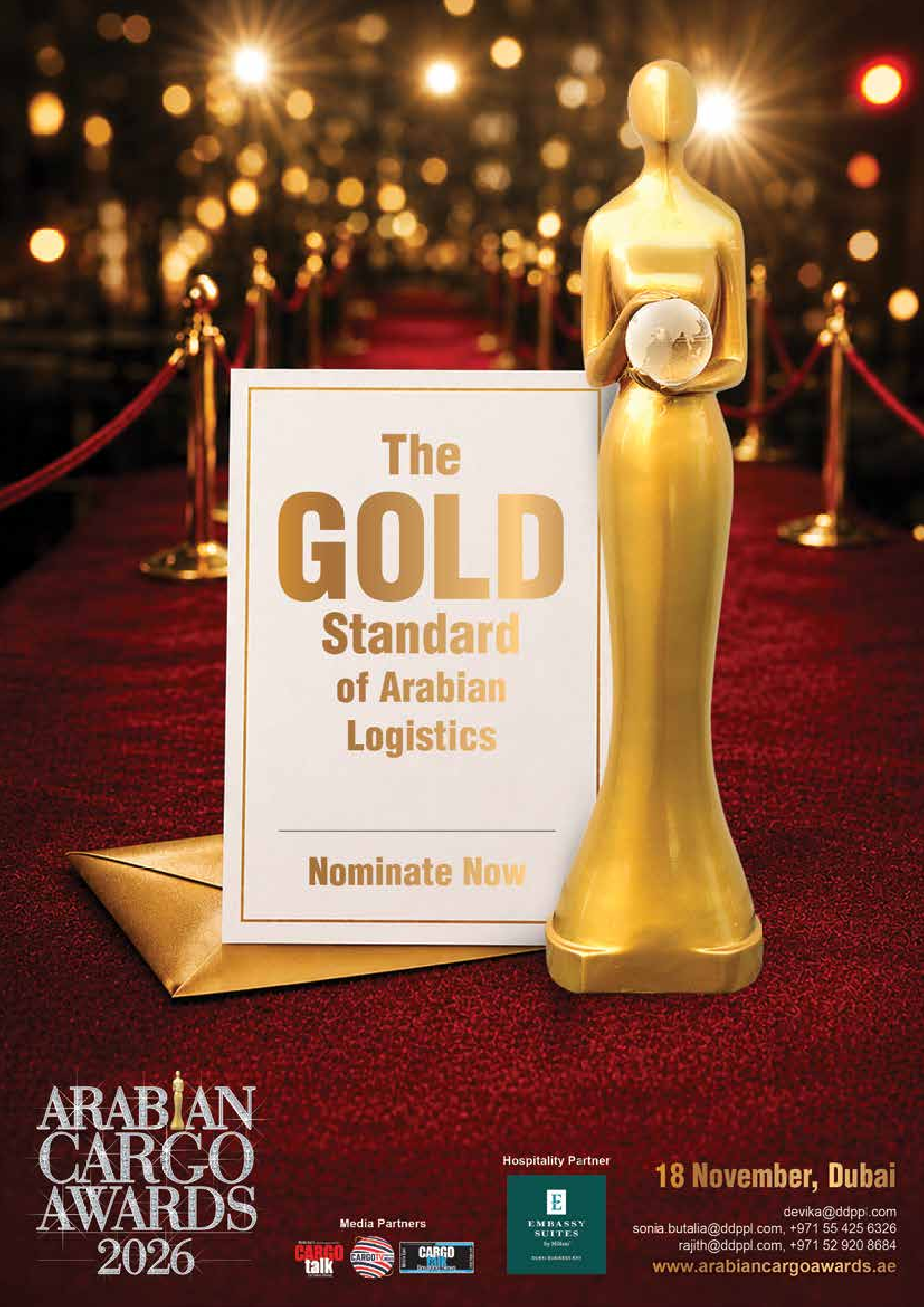

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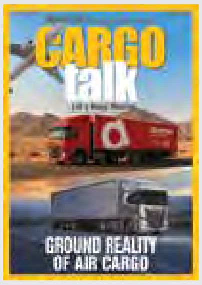

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RECALIBRATING cross-border trade routes

Cross-border trucking drives trade across the Middle East by connecting major ports, airports, and markets. Rising cargo volumes between the GCC, Asia, and Africa strain current networks, creating a demand for upgraded infrastructure, smarter border systems, and advanced logistics technology. Industry leaders point to a need for better systems, stronger infrastructure, and greater use of technology.

CT Bureau

The Middle East is seeing strong cross-border trade as businesses adjust to changing trade routes and global supply chains. Road freight is emerging as a key player, particularly across the UAE–Saudi Arabia and Oman–UAE corridors, while new connections with Iraq and Jordan are also gaining importance.

Companies are looking for flexible warehouses, better cargo visibility, and faster customs clearance. Though technology is helping, physical border delays, different regulations, and paperwork challenges remain. The industry professionals said that closer regional cooperation and better infrastructure are important to make cross-border cargo flow faster, more secure, and reliable.

Road freight is one of the most important links in cross-border trade, taking cargo from ports and airports to warehouses and final destinations. Its flexibility makes it useful for short and medium-distance movements across neighbouring markets. But border delays continue to affect the movement of goods. Differences in customs rules, documentation, permits, inspections, and infrastructure can add time and cost. The sector is turning to digital permits, electronic customs, pre-clearance, and connected systems to reduce these delays.

Border delays continue to affect the movement of goods. Differences in customs rules, documentation, permits, and infrastructure can add time and cost

The UAE–Saudi Arabia and Oman–UAE routes are seeing growth while links with Iraq and Jordan are opening new opportunities. There is scope for stronger rail links between Oman, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

Beyond infrastructure, businesses need better visibility and flexible distribution networks. Smaller warehouses closer to cities, bonded facilities, and integrated customs services can help firms respond faster when trade flows change. Regional integration and common border systems could make these movements more predictable.

Digital customs can remove border friction

Fareeda Fadhil
Director, Customs Audit Department Dubai Customs

Dubai Customs' integrated digital infra orchestrates a resilient, agile, and competitive trade ecosystem. This is anchored in Customs Notice No. (09/2021), which modernised cross-border e-commerce to boost business competitiveness. Powered by Mirsal 2, the Smart Risk Engine, and the cross-border e-commerce platform, Dubai Customs blends regulation with blockchain to eliminate border friction, achieving automated clearance and secure supply chains.

"Dubai Customs blends regulation with blockchain to eliminate border friction, achieving clearance and secure supply chains."

Strait of Hormuz closure forces logical shift

Fadi Azzi
Senior Director, Logistics Aramex

Cross-border demand is rising for fulfilment networks and hyper-local warehouses with multiple locations. Firms require facilities to handle value-added services and customs support. Businesses are prioritising resilience, allowing them to respond to trade flows. As new logistics hubs are emerging due to the Strait of Hormuz's closure, demand is rising for distribution centres for up-and-coming ports, airports, and trade corridors. This shift allows for resilience, enables faster fulfilment, and lower transportation costs.

"Businesses are prioritising resilience, allowing them to respond quickly and safely to shifting trade flows."

Gulf hubs are becoming Asia–Africa connectors

Fitsum Abadi
Managing Director, Cargo Kenya Airways

Demand has grown, driven by e-commerce, diversified supply chains, increasing flow of perishables, pharmaceuticals, and high-value goods. Gulf hubs remain important connectors between Asia and Africa, while rising volumes and economic integration are creating new cross-border opportunities. Significantly enablers include digital Airwaybills, cargo visibility, AI-driven planning, automated warehouses, integrated customs platforms, and air cargo hubs with advanced cold chain infrastructure.

"Enablers include digital AWBs, real-time visibility, AI-driven planning, automated warehouses, and cold chain infrastructure."

Investment must in border digitalisation

Marco Torta
Area Manager, Middle East IVECO

Customs delays, varying regulations, cross-border documentation, visas, permit requirements, infrastructure gaps, fuel costs, and driver shortages remain key challenges. The UAE–Saudi Arabia and Oman–Saudi Arabia routes are growth corridors, alongside emerging GCC trade connecting Gulf ports with Iraq and Jordan. Investment is a must in border digitalisation, unified customs systems, truck lanes, logistics hubs, and road upgrades. Digital permits and customs systems can accelerate clearance.

"Delays occur due to manual inspections, documentation errors, border congestion, and erratic regulations."

Simplified customs can reduce transit time

Aaron Smith
Chief Executive Officer
ACI Logistics

The KSA–UAE and Oman–UAE corridors are showing the strongest growth, driven by shifting geopolitical landscape and rerouted trade flows. Expanding green corridor pacts such as the UAE's arrangement with Oman will have the greatest impact. Pre-cleared customs processes between partner nations reduce transit, and replicating this model broadly would enable faster, predictable cross-border trucking movements. The opportunity lies in rail links from Oman and Khorfakkan through the UAE to KSA.

> *"Expanding green corridor pacts such as the UAE's arrangement with Oman will have the greatest impact."*

Pre-clearance can take time out of processing

Rizwan Kareem
Director, Air Freight Operations, ATS World

Digital permits, electronic customs platforms, and pre-clearance have significantly improved documentation accuracy, visibility, and processing times. At ATS, we see technology creating predictability across GCC road movements. But delays can still arise from physical inspections, documentation discrepancies, system interoperability, and differing regulatory needs between nations. The biggest opportunity is deeper regional trade integration supported by digital infra.

> *"Issues can arise from physical inspections, documentation differences, and regulatory needs between countries."*

Road freight still owns the first and last mile

Jo Ann Ignacio
Commercial Manager
KS Global Logistics

Trucking is what gets cargo across borders — not just between countries, but from the port or airport to the customer's door. It fills the gaps rail and sea freight cannot reach. Handling first- and last-mile makes the rest of the supply chain work. In the GCC and Europe, road cargo is the fastest way to move goods between markets. It is cheaper than air for short-to-medium distances but faces challenges like customs clearance delays, cross-border regulations, documentation needs, and infrastructure gaps.

> *"In the GCC and Europe, road freight is the fastest and most secure way to move goods between neighbouring markets."*

WORKING IN TANDEM

Tech, infra & customs

The Middle East logistics sector is evolving from a simple transit hub into a resilient network. Industry leaders state that success requires extra cargo capacity. It demands flexible infra, smart digital systems, and fast customs processes to handle shifting global trade corridors. As airlines expand their network, the region will move beyond being just a transit point.

CT Bureau

The region is investing in airports, logistics parks, ports, and multimodal transport networks as global trade patterns undergo transformation. Industry leaders said that these developments are building new ways to move cargo between Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Infrastructure alone will not be enough; efficient customs, digital systems, ground operations, and flexible policies will be equally important.

With airlines expanding their fleets and new trade lanes emerging, the region gears up for high cargo volumes. The focus is shifting towards linked logistics networks that can respond to changes in demand, trade, and supply chains.

New infrastructure is likely to give businesses various options to move cargo and reduce dependence on a single route or gateway. Projects such as Etihad Rail and new airport cargo facilities are connecting ports, airports, industrial areas, and distribution centres, to help move cargo quickly across borders. This will support the Middle East's role as a connection between major international markets. Fleet expansions which are planned by Etihad Airways, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, and Saudia will require more airport capacity, aircraft parking, and maintenance facilities.

New infra is likely to give businesses options to move cargo and reduce dependence on a single gateway

Logistics firms are investing in digital tracking, automated hubs, multimodal solutions, and regional partnerships. These tools can help firms respond when demand changes, capacity gets tighter, and trade routes are disrupted.

Experts said that new facilities must be backed by efficient customs and regulations. For airlines, the priority is adding capacity but making sure infra, operations, and connectivity work together. The success of future projects will depend on how well the region can build networks to support changing trade flows.

EMCT to increase handling, throughput

Leonard Rodrigues
VP, Cargo Revenue
Etihad Cargo

New cargo infrastructure will drive connectivity by removing bottlenecks and increasing throughput. The East Midfield Cargo Terminal will increase handling capacity, streamline cargo flows, reduce processing times, and enable movement of goods through Abu Dhabi, while maintaining Etihad Cargo's environmental and temperature-control standards. As trade between Asia, Europe, Africa, and the ME continues to grow, the facility will fortify Abu Dhabi's role as a transshipment hub.

> *"As trade between Asia, Europe, Africa, and the ME grows, the facility will fortify Abu Dhabi's role as a transshipment hub."*

Cargo networks need to connect beyond A to B

Tayssir Awada
Chief Services Officer
SolitAir Holding

SolitAir has been investing in key bases across the region to create network nodes that enable future growth without disruptions. Its approach is focused on four essentials: Technology to improve efficiency and optimise capacity; networks with solid ground support; a focus on meeting evolving expectations; and building a strong team. What matters is not designing a network that links point A to point B but creating a sustainable network, covering everything in between, while opening new trade lanes.

> *"Technology to improve efficiency, optimise cargo capacity, and build a tailored network with ground support."*

Infrastructure must stay ahead of trade shifts

Glyn Hughes
Director-General
TIACA

The Middle East will remain a major cargo gateway connecting East and West, and North and South. Growing volumes of time-sensitive, perishable, pharma, and high-tech cargo require investment in specialised handling. Planned fleet expansions by Etihad, Emirates, Qatar, Turkish and Saudi Airlines will require more airport capacity, parking, and maintenance. Agile policies and regular dialogue with the logistics and aviation sector will be essential to respond to changing trade patterns.

> *"Agile policies and regular dialogue with the logistics and aviation sector will be essential to respond to changing trade patterns."*

Flexibility strengthens supply chain resilience

S Arun Prakash
Head, Air Products
Compass Logistics Int'l

Logistics developments are those that are designed for adaptability than capacity alone. Integrating air, sea, road, and rail networks allows cargo to be redirected when demand shifts, capacity tightens, and trade lanes change. This flexibility fortifies supply chain resilience, while helping businesses control logistics costs. The ME is evolving from a transit region into a logistics orchestrator. New airports, logistics parks, ports, and multimodal corridors are creating faster routes between Asia, Europe, and Africa.

> *"New airports, logistics parks, and multimodal corridors are creating faster routes between Asia, Europe, and Africa."*

Logistics corridors to reduce transit times

Razmal Assen
Executive Director
Scanwell Logistics LLC

Forwarders are diversifying routes, expanding regional partnerships, investing in digital visibility, fortifying multimodal solutions to improve resilience, and reduce supply chain disruptions. New logistics corridors will improve linkage, reduce transit times, and create trade routes. Growing trade volumes, e-commerce expansion, supply chain diversification, geopolitical changes, sustainability, and demand for faster, reliable cargo movement drive infrastructure investment.

> *"Growing volumes, e-commerce, geopolitical changes, and demand for faster cargo flow drive infrastructure investment."*

New cargo infra to reshape supply chains

Lianna Coyne
Director
Coyne Airways

New cargo infrastructure will have the ability to reshape trade by fortifying multimodal connectivity, improving supply chain resilience, and expanding access to underserved markets. Success depends on customs, digital integration and regulatory harmonisation. Without these, competing hubs risk fragmented cargo flows, underutilised capacity, and poor returns on investment. Proximity has an advantage, but success depends on linkage, demand, border processes, and integration into supply chains.

> *"Proximity has an advantage, but success depends on linkage, border processes, and integration into supply chains."*

Rail freight strengthens multimodal logistics

Abdul Shukoor
Air Freight Manager
BGL Cargo

Integrated logistics infrastructure is reshaping cargo flows by reducing transit times, improving multimodal linkage, and creating competitive trade corridors. Economic diversification, e-commerce growth, rising volumes, digitalisation, sustainability goals, and govt-backed infrastructure are speeding up investment in logistics and air cargo. Projects like Etihad Rail fortify multimodal logistics by linking ports, airports, industrial zones, and distribution hubs through inland transport.

> *"Projects like Etihad Rail fortify multimodal logistics by linking ports, airports, and industrial zones, through inland transport."*

Forwarders must leverage tech to be resilient

Abid Hamza
Director
Freight Hub Shipping LLC

Forwarders are leveraging predictive digital technology, expanding multimodal networks, and hubs along trade corridors to maintain agility and supply chain resilience. Infrastructure across Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East will reduce transit times. These developments smoothen cross-border trade, bypass congestion zones, reduce costs, and foster resilient supply chain linkage across global markets. Integrating smart automated hubs, digital tracking, and flexible air–sea corridor ensures efficient cargo delivery.

> *"Integrating smart automated hubs, digital tracking, and flexible air–sea routes ensures efficient cargo delivery."*

When supercars take to the skies

Tom Sohorab, Business Development Manager, Premium Products, Etihad Cargo, explains how FlightValet uses customised handling, approved procedures, and advanced loading methods to ferry vehicles safely. Transporting luxury cars, supercars, EVs, and auto parts, every shipment needs safety checks, he adds.

CT Bureau

What are the steps in air transport of automotive parts?

Transporting vehicles by air requires expertise, particularly for finished vehicles, electric vehicles, high-value components, and supercars. Every shipment begins with a detailed assessment

Tom Sohorab
Business Development Manager
Premium Products, Etihad Cargo

of vehicle specifications, documentation, regulatory requirements, and loading plans to ensure safe, compliant transport.

At the heart of Etihad Cargo's FlightValet service is a wheel-strapping methodology developed with automotive OEMs. Unlike conventional methods that apply tension through wheel rims, FlightValet secures vehicles around the tyres, reducing the risk of cosmetic or structural damage during transit. Several vehicles moving through FlightValet feature unique engineering requirements, making manufacturer-approved handling procedures, and specialist SOPs essential. The service offers upper- and lower-deck loading options, including direct loading onto aircraft pallets to minimise vehicle handling and reduce risk.

What approvals and documents are needed for automotive cargo?

For automotive shipments, alongside standard import and export documentation, cargo may require certificates, carnets, insurance documentation, and dangerous goods declarations. Many vehicles ferried through FlightValet are supercars with unique engineering features, including gullwing or scissor doors, concealed battery isolation switches, and manufacturer-specific operating procedures. Safe transport relies on detailed SOPs and technical guidance from manufacturers and automotive specialists.

At Etihad Cargo, these shipments are handled only at approved stations by specially trained personnel using dedicated equipment. Combined with handling protocols, this ensures high-value vehicles are safely managed throughout the airport, loading, transport process, minimising risk, and maintaining the highest standards of care.

Safe transport relies on SOPs and technical guidance from manufacturers and automotive specialists

Whom do you work with to ensure regulatory and compliance needs are met before loading?

Etihad Cargo works closely with automotive manufacturers, freight forwarders, and logistics partners to ensure all regulatory, customs, and safety needs are met. Every cargo movement is supported by documentation, regulatory compliance checks, and vehicle-specific handling procedures, ensuring seamless, secure, and fully compliant transport across our global network.

What does automotive cargo rely on to ensure damage-free transit?

Specialised handling is a must for protecting high-value automotive shipments. While temperature monitoring may be required for components such as batteries and sensitive electronics, the priority for finished vehicles is preserving their physical condition. Vehicles transported through FlightValet are rare or high-performance models with unique operating needs. To support this, FlightValet combines manufacturer-approved SOPs, dedicated restraint equipment, and proprietary wheel-strapping technology to secure vehicles by their tyres to reduce the risk of wheel damage. With experienced loadmasters and upper- and lower-deck loading options, these measures ensure vehicles arrive in the same condition in which they were entrusted to us.

What shipments are commonly moved by air — spare parts, engines, electronics, or high-value components?

Etihad Cargo ferries a range of automotive shipments, including finished vehicles, supercars, EVs, spare parts, engines, batteries, and other high-value components. Demand is driven by original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), dealerships, motorsport teams, collectors, and manufacturers require secure, time-critical transport for vehicles, and parts across the international markets.

What handling requirements apply for automotive components?

Precision electronics require secure packaging and protection from shock and vibration, while EV batteries and battery-powered components must comply with global DGs regulations. For finished vehicles, FlightValet applies dedicated restraint systems and manufacturer-informed handling procedures tailored to each vehicle. Vehicles we transport are rare or high-performance supercars with engineering features, requiring SOPs, and trained personnel to ensure they are manoeuvred, secured, and transported without compromising their condition.

What is the journey of a vehicle through FlightValet — from booking to final delivery?

Every FlightValet shipment begins with an assessment of the vehicle, destination and any handling or regulatory needs. Our personnel verify documentation and create a tailored loading plan to ensure the right equipment, procedures, and aircraft configuration are in place. Vehicles are tightened using Aeronet restraint equipment and loaded directly onto upper deck ULDs to minimise handling and reduce risk.

For high-performance vehicles with manufacturer-specific requirements, experienced loadmasters follow detailed SOPs developed with experts to ensure safe handling throughout the journey. We never leave the car keys loose or hanging from the windshield. We have a chain of custody to ensure the keys are never lost: An Etihad personnel is entrusted with the keys.

Which regions are generating demand for FlightValet services?

FlightValet has evolved into one of Etihad Cargo's premium cargo solution, serving a range of automotive customers, from global manufacturers, luxury, and collector car owners. We are seeing interest from luxury car owners and vehicle collectors, particularly in the Middle East, the UK, and Germany, alongside manufacturers ferrying finished vehicles and EVs to global markets.

IN BRIEF

- Tyre-based strapping reduces damage risk
- Custom loading plans for every vehicle
- OEM-approved handling procedures
- Direct ULD loading minimises handling
- Strict battery and component compliance
- Specialist teams ensure secure transport

Abu Dhabi aims for high volumes with less dwell time

Positioning itself as a gateway between global markets, Abu Dhabi is fortifying its cargo capabilities through infrastructure, connectivity, and innovation. In an interview, Jubran AlBreiki, CEO, Velora, reflects on the emirate's growth trajectory and future opportunities, with an emphasis on shifting volumes safely.

Sonia Sali

What sets Abu Dhabi apart from other regional air cargo hubs?

Abu Dhabi's advantage is the depth and integration of its logistics ecosystem. The supply chain does not operate in isolation, and air cargo is no exception. The terminal at Zayed International Airport enables seamless connectivity between the emirate's ports, road network, emerging rail capability, and industrial zones, giving businesses multimodal choice and

Jubran AlBreiki
CEO
Velora

resilient access to regional and global markets.

The Zayed airport is the only cargo hub in the UAE, which offers freighter stands, multimodal

> *We combine specialised infrastructure with experts capable of handling belly & freighter volumes*

connectivity, and the ability for airlines to interline onto multiple passenger aircraft or freighters.

For Velora, we combine specialised infrastructure with experienced teams capable of handling belly-hold and freighter volumes, including a variety of products such as pharmaceuticals, perishables, live animals, and out-of-gauge shipments. Our focus is always to move high volumes with minimum dwell time.

The East Midfield Cargo Terminal (EMCT) will take this proposition further. With advanced automation, expanded cool chain capability, and annual capacity of up to 1.5 million tonnes, it will provide the scale, flexibility, and service quality needed to support Abu Dhabi's next phase as a global cargo gateway. The USP of a cargo hub is speed and efficiency and we can handle high volumes, connecting freight with minimal dwell times.

Do you think cargo hubs are competing with one another, or are they creating a regional network?

Geopolitical disruptions have reinforced that regional resilience is dependent on cooperation. When established trade routes are affected, cargo must be redirected quickly across airports, ports, and road networks. A more connected Gulf logistics ecosystem, therefore, benefits every hub and, most importantly, gives the companies choice, continuity, and confidence.

How is digitalisation changing the way air cargo moves through Abu Dhabi?

Digitalisation is making cargo move faster, more transparent, and more predictable. Velora has helped introduce Advanced Trade and Logistics Platform (ATLP) into Abu Dhabi's air cargo environment, digitising processes, and improving coordination among stakeholders. This has resulted in reducing waiting times and processes by approximately 80 per cent.

Within our operations, end-to-end performance tracking enables us to identify emerging delays and intervene earlier. Looking ahead, AI-connected devices, and predictive analytics will improve resource allocation, disruption management, and real-time customer visibility.

General cargo will remain the foundation, while pharma, perishables, and e-comm offer growth potential

Which segments drive Abu Dhabi's next phase of growth?

Abu Dhabi's strength is its diversified air cargo base. General cargo, which represents about 60 per cent of our current tonnage, will remain the foundation, while pharmaceuticals, perishables, express, e-commerce and high-tech cargo offer growth potential. Velora is operating a CEIV Pharma-certified facility, and the Midfield Cargo Terminal will add 16,000 sqm of cool chain infrastructure for pharmaceuticals and perishables. We see a strong opportunity from Asia, particularly China, supporting e-commerce and technology.

How does Abu Dhabi's location fortify supply chain diversification and market access?

From Abu Dhabi, cargo can move onward by air, road, sea, and rail. Our Road Feeder Services operate 65 truck trips daily to other UAE cargo hubs, giving firms changing routing options and access to broader networks. That agility is valuable during disruptions, when businesses need credible alternatives rather than dependence on a single gateway. Etihad Rail strengthens this proposition by adding high-capacity land-freight option.

What will drive cargo growth in Abu Dhabi over the next five years?

We expect Abu Dhabi's volumes to continue a positive trajectory over the next five years. Having handled close to 900,000 tonnes of cargo in this year, the forecast is to be close to 1 million tonnes by year-end. Over the next five years, we expect to be close to 1,300,000 tonnes. The principal contributors will be Etihad Cargo's continued expansion, Asian trade movements, growth in specialised products and Abu Dhabi's industrial development.

How is Abu Dhabi attracting cargo services and strengthening global connectivity?

Airlines and logistics expand where they see sustainable demand, dependable infra and operational performance. We support 30 airlines and the forwarding community. Combined with the reach of Etihad Cargo and growing trade links with Asia, Europe and Africa, this creates a platform for new services.

Advantage

- Integrated air, sea, road, and rail connectivity
- Multimodal logistics ecosystem
- Dedicated freighter infrastructure
- Faster cargo movement and lower dwell times
- Growing specialised cargo capabilities

Progress

- Asia–Europe–Africa trade flows
- Pharma, perishables, e-commerce growth
- Digitalisation driving efficiency
- East Midfield Cargo Terminal expansion
- 1.3 million tonne cargo target ahead

SolitAir eyes Global South's new trade lanes

SolitAir has expanded its network, driven by demand across emerging trade corridors and shifting global trade patterns. In an interview, Tayssir Awada, Chief Services Officer, SolitAir Holding, reflects on the company's growth strategy, market opportunities, and the outlook for air cargo volumes.

CT Bureau

What is driving SolitAir's network growth, and where do you see the opportunities ahead?

SolitAir's growth has been driven by service reliability, tailored business solutions, operational excellence, and expanding market coverage, supported by an experienced team. The company sees opportunities in integrating its network to deliver customised solutions that connect regional trade lanes with local markets.

Tayssir Awada
Chief Services Officer
SolitAir Holding

Which underserved markets hold the potential for dedicated freighter services?

Emerging markets across the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Indian subcontinent offer several growth opportunities, driven by a shift in trade from traditional international routes to regional market clusters.

Which Asian markets offer the biggest growth opportunities?

Global South is emerging as an important trade corridor, aligning with SolitAir's network strategy. Cargo growth opportunities have been powered by new manufacturing markets and decentralised productions, creating demand for air cargo connection between regional market clusters. Asia–Africa trade is likely to account for much of this growth, while mature markets will continue to complement these emerging trade movements.

How much cargo did SolitAir handle in H1, and how did it compare with expectations?

SolitAir operated seven aircraft across its regional network in H1 of this year, with flights running at full capacity. The outlook for cargo demand remains positive as new trade lanes and markets open, with the company planning to expand its fleet to support future growth.

> *SolitAir enables firms to grow their cargo business and reach more markets across the Global South*

How do you expect volumes to grow in H2 2026 as your network expands across significant markets?

Air cargo volumes have remained resilient despite regional conflicts, supported by a growing customer base. SolitAir expects to outperform its H1 of this year's results from last year, and with continued regional stability and economic growth, the company anticipates strong air cargo demand through the second half of the year.

Have new routes boosted volumes, and which markets have exceeded expectations?

Yes. Every new market has added network connectivity and created value for cargo movement. Supported by a reliable fleet, operational excellence, and an expanding network, the company enables businesses to grow their air cargo business and reach additional markets across the Global South.

Drivers

- Customer-focused solutions
- Operational reliability
- Network connectivity
- New trade corridors
- Regional market demand
- Experienced team

Outlook

- New routes boosting volumes
- Asia–Africa trade growth
- Strong H2 demand outlook
- Full-capacity operations
- Growing customer base

Turning UK exports into international flows

From fresh produce to aircraft parts and medicines, UK exports are reaching more global markets through air cargo connections. Emirates SkyCargo recorded an 11% YoY increase in UK export volumes during 2025–26, with aerospace, pharmaceuticals, and food products driving growth.

CT Bureau

Emirates SkyCargo moved 57,000 tonnes of exports from the UK to global markets during the past financial year, compared to the previous year. Between April and June 2026, UK export volumes grew 7 per cent compared with the same period last year.

The growth reflects rising demand for faster and reliable air cargo links that connect regional production hubs with international markets. With eight UK gateways linked to its network, the carrier is supporting exporters across sectors by linking manufacturing, life sciences, and food-producing regions with markets in the ME, Asia, Africa, and Australasia.

Khawla Abdulla
VP, Cargo Commercial Europe & Russia, Emirates SkyCargo

"The growth in exports from the UK reflects the rising importance of fast, reliable, and globally connected logistics networks in enabling global trade. Emirates SkyCargo plays a vital role in linking firms across the UK and Europe with markets in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Australasia, providing seamless access to customers around the world," said Khawla Abdulla, VP, Cargo Commercial Europe and Russia, Emirates SkyCargo.

The growth reflects demand for faster air cargo links that connect regional hubs with global markets

By bridging UK's regional production centres directly to our expanding global network via our hub in Dubai and through our specialised cargo solutions, we continue to strengthen the flow of trade supporting industries ranging from life sciences and aerospace to perishables and advanced manufacturing.

"The aerospace sector is a key contributor to export growth. Between January and June, the carrier transported more than 570 tonnes of aircraft parts and aerospace components from the UK. Shipments of aircraft-on-ground cargo, which supports urgent aviation needs, increased 300 per cent YoY during the period," Abdulla added. High-value technology equipment, including data centre components and server racks, formed part of UK exports shifted through the network from manufacturing and engineering clusters around Manchester and London.

Life sciences exports have also recorded strong demand, with 1,600 tonnes of pharmaceuticals and 26 tonnes of clinical trial medicines transported from the UK in H1 of this year. Newcastle emerged as the key gateway for pharmaceutical shipments due to its proximity to the UK's life sciences manufacturing base.

The food and perishables sector remained another major contributor. Emirates SkyCargo moved 1,500 tonnes of Scottish shellfish and 1,200 tonnes of smoked salmon during the first half of the year. It also ferried 1,000 tonnes of food products from the UK to the UAE, including strawberries and cheese.

Aramex's multimodal model delivers record Q2 growth

Aramex's freight forwarding business was the main driver of its growth in the second quarter of this year, as the company reported a record quarterly revenue of Ð1.83 billion. Group revenue rose 22 per cent year-on-year, while freight forwarding posted its highest quarterly revenue in the history of Aramex.

CT Bureau

The performance came during a period of continued disruption across regional trade routes. Aramex used alternative road, air, and sea options to keep cargo moving, including Europe-to-the Middle East land routes and additional air and sea charter capacity.

Amadou Diallo
Group CEO
Aramex

"In Q2 2026, we delivered our highest quarterly revenues in Aramex's history, achieved the highest forwarding revenue, while improving profitability. The robust performance demonstrates the resilience of our business and the strength of our diversified operating model," said Amadou Diallo, Group CEO, Aramex.

> *Flexible networks allow forwarders to shift shipments between road, air, and sea and reduce delays*

For the freight forwarding sector, the results point to the importance of having more than one route or transport option. Changes in trade routes and regional disruptions can quickly affect cargo flows. Flexible networks allow the freight forwarders to shift shipments between road, air, and sea and reduce the impact of delays on customers.

Aramex further stated that tighter control of pricing supported the freight forwarding business. The multimodal network of the company allowed it to respond to changing air cargo requirements while maintaining cargo movements through different gateways.

Net profit stood at Ð47 million, compared with a net loss of Ð9.3 million in the same quarter last year. On a normalised basis, net profit increased from Ð5.9 million to Ð47 million.

For the first half of 2026, revenue reached Ð3.43 billion, up 12 per cent year-on-year. EBIT rose to Ð139 million, while net profit reached Ð64 million.

Domestic Express grew while International Express shipment volumes were stable after declines in the earlier periods. Aramex's overall financial performance also improved. Gross profit increased 19 per cent year-on-year to Ð392 million in Q2. EBIT reached Ð87 million, compared with Ð16 million reported in Q2 2025 and Ð32 million on a normalised basis.

The performance comes as supply chains need to adapt to changing routes and operating conditions. The ability to combine different transport modes can give shippers options when a particular route becomes difficult or costly. Aramex stated that its Accelerate28, focusing on operational and cost improvements, contributed to good performance during H1 2026.

IN BRIEF

- Ð1.83 bn Q2 revenue, up 22% YoY
- Ð3.43 bn H1 revenue, up 12% YoY
- Alternative road, air, and sea routes kept cargo moving
- Europe–Middle East land routes supported trade flows
- Air and sea charters added routing flexibility

Kenya Airways for more airlift as perishables exports rise

Kenya's growing exports of flowers, fruits, vegetables, seafood, and other fresh products are increasing demand for more air cargo capacity. Perishables account for a significant share of outbound volumes handled by Kenya Airways Cargo, says Fitsum Abadi, Managing Director, Cargo, Kenya Airways.

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Kenya Airways Cargo currently transports around 65 million kilograms of cargo annually through a combination of dedicated freighters and belly-holds of passenger aircraft. The country's high-value agricultural produce remains a key component of its global cargo, reflecting Kenya's position as a leading exporter of perishables. Reliable air connectivity is critical for these products, as exporters depend on efficient transport solutions to maintain product quality and meet delivery needs across global markets, said Fitsum Abadi, Managing Director, Cargo, Kenya Airways.

Fitsum Abadi
Managing Director, Cargo
Kenya Airways

To support growing demand and strengthen Kenya's export competitiveness, the airline is pursuing the acquisition of more wide-body freighter capacity, which would increase available cargo uplift and help address persistent capacity constraints. While discussions with potential partners are ongoing, no particular timeline has yet been confirmed.

Abadi averred that Kenyan exporters continue to face higher air freight costs than competing regional hubs, impacting the global competitiveness of Kenya's fresh produce sector.

Beyond Europe, Kenya exporters are targeting high-growth destinations in the Middle East and Gulf region

He added that expanding cargo capacity must be complemented by supportive aviation and trade policies, including application of reciprocity principles in bilateral air service pacts to ensure a level playing field for Kenyan carriers.

Beyond European markets, Kenyan horticultural exporters are targeting high-growth destinations in the Middle East and Gulf region, where demand for fresh produce is rising. Enhanced capacity would improve market access, fortify supply chain reliability, and support diversification of Kenya's export destinations.

Expanding capacity will help exporters respond better to market demand, reduce supply chain pressures, and improve Kenya's ability to compete in perishables. Fortifying cargo connectivity will remain key as Kenya continues to expand its farm exports and explore new trade opportunities across global markets.

SMARTIST 2.0 to double Turkish Cargo's handling

With cargo volumes continuing to grow, airports are switching to automation to handle larger shipments faster and more efficiently. Turkish Cargo is expanding its SMARTIST facility at Istanbul Airport, adding new automated systems that will double the terminal's annual handling capacity.

CT Bureau

The new automation project will increase the terminal's annual handling capacity from 2–4.5 million tonne. The airline has selected Lödige Industries to provide the automated cargo handling systems for the SMARTIST 2.0 expansion. Lödige Industries had previously installed the automation systems for the first phase of the facility, which began operations in 2021.

The expansion comes as global cargo demand continues to grow, putting pressure on airports and operators to handle larger volumes, while maintaining speed and accuracy. The upgraded facility will use automated storage and retrieval systems to improve the movement of Unit Load Devices and in-house pallets within the terminal.

Murat Yalçın Kırca
VP, Cargo Operations (Global)
Turkish Cargo

As global trade increases demand for faster air freight links, large cargo hubs are investing in automation to reduce manual processes and improve efficiency. The SMARTIST expansion is likely to fortify Istanbul's role as a transit point between Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa by allowing cargo to move through its facility.

SMARTIST hub is likely to fortify Istanbul's role as a transit point between Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa

Covering 370,000 sqm of closed area, SMARTIST is designed to manage complex cargo operations, including handling, storage and transfer of cargo. The increased capacity will allow Turkish Cargo to accommodate future growth in e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, and time-sensitive goods.

The expansion is aimed at strengthening the carrier's ability to handle future cargo growth through technology-driven infrastructure, said Murat Yalçın Kırca, Vice President, Cargo Operations (Global), Turkish Cargo.

"With SMARTIST 2.0, our ambition goes far beyond adding capacity. We continue to strengthen our role in global freight through intelligent infra. The next-generation facility allows us to manage rising volumes without disrupting our operational flow, ensuring an uninterrupted service quality for our customers worldwide. This approach is supported by Lödige Industries' expertise in advanced cargo handling systems," he added.

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5 new routes added by Oman Air to boost Asia linkage

Oman Air launched new routes to expand its global cargo network, including the Middle East and Asia. The move may add capacity and provide businesses with options to move sensitive cargo between Oman and major regional hubs, says Michael Duggan, Head of Cargo, Oman Air.

CT Bureau

For the air cargo sector, the expansion is expected to increase network coverage at a time when trade between the Middle East and Asia continues to grow and expand. More connections like these can help reduce transit times and improve the movement of perishables, pharmaceuticals, e-commerce shipments, and other high-value goods.

Oman Air's new services connect Muscat with Singapore, Tashkent, and Sochi, while adding flights between Abu Dhabi and Muscat and a new Salalah–Dubai service. All five routes are being operated with Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft.

The additional routes will strengthen the options available to cargo customers by providing greater connectivity across Asia while supporting the movement of time-sensitive and high-value shipments, said

Michael Duggan
Head of Cargo
Oman Air

Michael Duggan, Head of Cargo, Oman Air. "We are particularly pleased that the additions further expand Oman Air Cargo's perishables capacity, a key objective of the airline," he said.

The Muscat–Tashkent cargo route will operate bi-weekly, creating additional cargo capacity between the Sultanate of Oman and Central Asia. The service is likely to support growing cargo movement, particularly in perishable products and other goods that require fast and reliable transport.

The routes will fortify options available to cargo customers by providing greater connectivity across Asia

The Muscat–Singapore service will operate four times a week, giving Oman Air's freight division, Oman Air Cargo, direct access to one of Asia's largest air cargo hubs.

The new connection is expected to improve access to Southeast Asian markets while offering onward connections to destinations across the global air freight network.

"As trade between the Sultanate of Oman and Asia continues to grow, expanding our network enables us to offer the companies greater flexibility, improved market access, and more efficient routing options," Duggan said.

The remaining additions include one weekly flight to Sochi, three weekly flights between Dubai and Salalah, and daily flights between Abu Dhabi and Muscat. Together, the five new routes provide more cargo capacity and routing choices for air cargo operators, supporting regional supply chains and strengthening air freight connectivity between the Gulf and Asia.

QUICK FACTS

- New links to Singapore, Tashkent, Sochi, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai–Salalah
- B737 Max 8 aircraft deployed
- Abu Dhabi–Muscat: Daily flights
- Focus on perishables and time-sensitive cargo
- Expands access to Asian trade markets

Saudia, Riyadh Cargo to expand trade routes

Improving connectivity has become the focus of the air cargo industry as demand grows across global markets. Reflecting this trend, Saudia Cargo and Riyadh Cargo have reached an interline agreement to strengthen freight connections and expand their combined global network.

Pravin Singh, VP, Cargo, Riyadh Air, and Eng. Mansour Alasmi, VP, Network & Revenue, Saudia Cargo signing the agreement

CT Bureau

The agreement will allow shipments to shift easily across both airlines' networks, giving forwarders access to more global destinations through a single arrangement. The partnership may improve cargo linkage, expand routing options, and support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's plans to strengthen its role in international trade.

The agreement combines Saudia Cargo's existing global cargo network with Riyadh Cargo's growing global operations. Firms will be able to link shipments beyond the airlines' direct routes, reducing the need for separate transport arrangements and improve access to global markets.

"By combining Saudia Cargo's established expertise and global capabilities with Riyadh Cargo's future ambitions, we will provide users with more integrated solutions to facilitate trade. This aligns with our joint efforts to alter Saudi Arabia into a premier global logistics hub, while driving sustainable growth for both airways," said Eng. Mansour Alasmi, VP, Network & Revenue, Saudia Cargo.

A combined network offers more routing choices, making it easier to move cargo as per changing demand

The partnership also expands Riyadh Cargo's network beyond its current destinations, which include London, Dubai, Cairo, Jeddah, Madrid, and Malaga. Future links to Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai, and Dhaka will become part of the network as Riyadh Air continues to expand its global operations. The airline aims to serve 100 destinations by 2030.

For forwarders and logistics firms, the pact means flexibility when planning shipments. A wider combined network offers more routing choices, making it easier to move cargo between regions and respond to changing customer demand. Better connectivity can reduce transit times on certain routes and improve access to key trade corridors linking the Middle East with Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The collaboration is expected to strengthen KSA's cargo infrastructure by linking the strengths of two national carriers. Instead of operating independently, both airlines will be able to use each other's networks to extend their market reach without launching new direct services immediately. This can help improve cargo capacity utilisation, while offering users a broader range of destinations.

"As Riyadh Air builds a global airline from the heart of the Kingdom, Riyadh Cargo has an ambition to become a modern, digitally enabled, and reliable cargo business serving users across global markets. This pact supports that ambition by extending our reach, opening new trade opportunities, and helping position Riyadh as a key gateway in the future of global logistics," commented Pravin Singh, VP of Cargo, Riyadh Air.

Uganda Airlines orders eight jets to unlock new markets

Uganda Airlines has placed its first-ever order with Boeing for eight aircraft, including four 737-8 jets and four 787-9 Dreamliners, as the carrier plans to expand its network and strengthen connectivity between East Africa and key international markets, including the Middle East.

CT Bureau

The aircraft orders by Uganda Airlines are likely to support the fleet expansion strategy and improve ability to serve evolving demand for air connectivity between Uganda and overseas markets. The fleet expansion may improve air linkage from Entebbe and support Uganda's efforts to develop the airport as a regional trade and logistics hub. The additional aircraft will increase belly-hold capacity on global routes and provide options for shifting goods across important trade lanes.

The Boeing 737-8 aircraft will support regional operations and routes linking East Africa with markets such as the Middle East and India. The 787-9 Dreamliner will enable the airlines to strengthen long-haul operations to destinations across the ME, Asia, and Europe, said Ato Girma Wake, CEO, Uganda Airlines.

Ato Girma Wake
CEO
Uganda Airlines

The aircraft would help the carrier improve links between Uganda and global markets, while supporting trade, investment, and cargo development.

Airglow Aviation is the GSA for Uganda Airlines in the UAE/ME, supporting the airline's commercial and cargo development in the market. Led by Rohit Thakwani, CEO, Airglow Aviation, will play a key role in building cargo demand for Uganda Airlines' freighter operations by strengthening ties with forwarders, exporters, importers and cargo agents, identifying two-way cargo flows, and developing trade lanes between the GCC, Uganda and the African network.

Links between Uganda and ME hubs could create opportunities for movement of goods through major gateways

The new-gen aircraft may improve operational efficiency, with the 737 MAX and 787 Dreamliner models, offering fuel savings of 20–25 per cent, thus supporting more sustainable and cost-effective cargo operations. For the sector, links between Uganda and Middle East hubs could create opportunities for movement of goods through major logistics gateways in the Gulf. The aircraft will support the airlines' plans to expand its global network and increase capacity across existing routes.

The airline has been focusing on building cargo links, with improved air linkage helping businesses access new markets and supporting movement of goods across East Africa and global trade corridors. The order comes as the airline plans to add freighter capacity with two Boeing converted freighters to expand its cargo operations.

Time-critical cargo demands smarter logistics

Abid Hamza, Director, Freight Hub Shipping LLC, says automotive, aerospace, healthcare and pharma, and electronics are generating demand for time-critical logistics. Managing urgent shipments comes with many challenges, but tech is playing a vital role in making time-critical logistics more responsive, he adds.

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Automotive companies rely on On-Board Couriers and Next Flight Out services to prevent expensive assembly line shutdowns, while the aerospace sector requires immediate Aircraft on Ground support. Healthcare demands transport for temperature-sensitive biologics and organs.

Abid Hamza, Director, Freight Hub Shipping LLC, asserted that managing a shipment requires tight coordination across planning, routing, customs pre-clearance, and final-mile execution. "Important operational challenges include securing immediate air cargo capacity, navigating complex regulatory compliance under tight deadlines, and maintaining end-to-end visibility across fragmented transport modes without losing lead time," he added.

Abid Hamza
Director
Freight Hub Shipping LLC

URGENT CARGO

Time-critical logistics handles high-value, perishable or mission-critical goods. These include automotive components, spare aircraft parts, live biopharma, semiconductor chips, luxury goods, and legal documents. Critical shipments typically include specialised medical equipment, emergency industrial components, and raw chemical ingredients needed to keep domestic production running. Exports can include time-sensitive farm products, customised machinery, and energy-sector equipment. Any item where delivery delays cause major financial losses, operational downtime, or life-safety risks requires expedited handling through priority cargo or chartering.

> *ML can optimise carrier selection and rate matching by evaluating many flight options within seconds*

Disruptions such as flight cancellations, extreme weather conditions, and capacity shortages require real-time rerouting, and proactive risk management. Control towers monitor cargo 24x7 using IoT tracking devices to detect delays. If a flight is cancelled or delayed, logistics teams activate pre-planned contingency routes, shifting cargo to alternative airlines, charter flights, and ground transport. Ties with global carrier networks and local airside handlers can provide priority access to secondary air hubs and emergency lift capacity when trade lanes face congestion. ML can optimise carrier selection and rate matching by evaluating thousands of flight options within seconds.

Royal Jordanian posts 36% rise in H1 cargo handling

Royal Jordanian Airlines handled 21,460 tonnes of air cargo in the first half of this year, recording an increase from the corresponding period last year. The growth comes as the airline continues to strengthen its cargo operations and expand its international network.

CT Bureau

The rise in cargo volumes by Royal Jordanian Airlines points to growing demand for capacity through the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, supporting the movement of goods between the Middle East and international markets. For businesses, air connections can provide additional options for moving time-sensitive and higher-value shipments, while supporting regional trade flows.

Highlighting the air cargo's significance, Samer Majali, Vice Chairman and CEO, Royal Jordanian Airlines, said the sector is a key contributor to the Kingdom's economy by supporting trade, supply chains, and exports. Majali added that the airlines is investing as much as JOD30 million (US$ 42,313,650) in expanding and modernising its air cargo terminal at Queen Alia International Airport.

Investment gives Jordan more capacity to handle air freight and support the development of its role as a link between regional and global markets. A large and modern cargo facility can help forwarders and other logistics companies manage shipments efficiently.

The cargo growth comes alongside an expansion of its global network. During H1 of this year, the airlines launched services to

Samer Majali
Vice Chairman and CEO
Royal Jordanian Airlines

destinations such as Munich, Hamburg, Sharjah, Alexandria, Dallas, Vienna, and Tashkent.

For the industry, additional connections can widen the range of international markets that can be served through the Kingdom. New links can create more cargo routing options for the goods moving between the Middle East, Europe, and Central Asia,

More handling capacity can help accommodate future freight growth while infra can support faster movement

among others. The airlines stated that cargo remains a key part of Jordan's economy, supporting trade, supply chains and exports. The increase to 21,460 tonnes in the first half of this year shows the scale of cargo moving through the airline's network.

Additional handling capacity can help accommodate future freight growth, while better infrastructure can support faster movement of goods through the airport.

As the regional trade networks become more and more connected, airports and cargo facilities are playing a larger role in supporting supply chains.

For Jordan, more capacity and wider global links will fortify its position in the regional cargo network and provide the existing exporters as well as the logistics firms many options for reaching overseas markets.

AT A GLANCE

- Airlines investing JOD30 million (US$ 42 million)
- 21,460 tonnes posted in H1 of this year
- Investment to give more cargo capacity
- Jordan to play global linkage in ME air cargo

Dubai Customs puts AI to work before cargo arrives

Dubai Customs has introduced AI to improve how it assesses shipments, supports decision-making, and gears up for cargo before it arrives. The move includes the pilot development of an enterprise intelligence platform and an Advance Cargo Information (ACI) system that analyses shipment data before arrival.

CT Bureau

The initiatives are aimed at making customs processes more proactive, particularly by identifying potential risks earlier and giving customs teams more information before cargo reaches the border. For importers, exporters and logistics companies, earlier access to shipment information could help make clearance more predictable and reduce delays linked to risk assessment and documentation.

One of the key initiatives is OCTA, an enterprise intelligence platform being developed to support decision-making and knowledge management. The platform uses artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language understanding to analyse data, provide recommendations and turn information into insights that can support policies, procedures and operational decisions.

Dr Abdulla Busenad
Director-General
Dubai Customs

Dubai Customs is also advancing the pilot phase of its ACI system. This system uses AI to analyse shipment information before cargo arrives. This is intended to strengthen risk assessment while maintaining the balance between trade facilitation and border security.

Dr Abdulla Busenad, Director-General of Dubai Customs, said AI is being treated as an investment in the future of trade rather than only as a technology project. He said the initiatives are intended to facilitate trade, support businesses, and prepare the customs system for future requirements.

The ACI system uses artificial intelligence to analyse shipment information before the cargo arrives

For the cargo and logistics sector, the use of pre-arrival data could be particularly important. Customs authorities can assess shipment information before cargo reaches the border, allowing potential risks to be identified earlier and decisions to be made with more information.

This can help improve the flow of legitimate cargo while allowing customs to focus closely on cargo that require further checks.

The initiatives form part of its wider use of AI to redesign government operations and support the UAE's broader push towards the use of advanced technologies in trade and customs. Adel Al Suwaidi, Director of the Strategy and Corporate Excellence Department, Dubai Customs, said the authority is building an integrated enterprise intelligence ecosystem in which AI drives performance improvement, service development, innovation and decision-making in line with global best practices.

Freight forwarding's AI race faces a data issue

AI is fast becoming part of forwarding, but its impact is still taking shape. As firms explore AI across documentation, operations, and decision-making, connected systems and clean data remain key. Toby Edwards, Director, Trade Tech, highlights the opportunities shaping AI adoption in freight forwarding.

CT Bureau

AI adoption in freight forwarding is at a nascent stage, with companies still experimenting with technology and seeing limited results at scale. Edwards pointed to research from The Loadstar and Raft, which found 22.2 per cent of organisations have adopted AI on scale. He cites Massachusetts Institute of Technology project and NANDA study, which found that 95 per cent of enterprise generative AI pilots delivered no measurable returns. "The

Toby Edwards
Director
Trade Tech

announcements are running well ahead of the outcomes," said Edwards.

As per Edwards, document processing is where much of the early progress with AI is taking place. This depends on the quality of the underlying

> *Most forwarding companies are currently adopting Bolt-on AI tools that sit on top of their existing systems*

data. "It works where the data underneath is clean and connected, which can only come from automation." Without this foundation, AI can move messy data around faster. "The state of the data matters more than the area."

AI ADOPTION

Most forwarding firms are currently adopting Bolt-on AI tools that sit on top of their existing systems. These include document readers, chat assistants, and exception alerts.

Fragmented data remains a challenge. Edwards said that forwarders seeing value are those that have automated repeatable work on a connected platform and are then adding AI on top.

Several business pressures are driving logistics firms to explore AI. These include margin pressure, complex compliance requirements across customs regimes, staff turnover, and growing demand for visibility. Boards are asking companies what they are doing about AI. Stating that this was a major driver, Edwards said that wanting to be seen as doing something with AI is not the same as knowing what problem needs to be solved.

DATA FOUNDATION

For forwarders, Edwards averred most gains come from automation rather than AI itself. Converting rates into quotes, quotes into bookings, generating customs filings, triggering milestone notifications, allocating costs, and

producing invoices are all rules-based activities that automation can handle when data is connected.

AI can then work as a layer on top of this foundation, helping with complex tasks such as reading bills of lading and invoices or identifying exceptions across volumes of shipments. Accounting is one area where this distinction is vital. Shipment-level costs, revenues, and reconciliations remain difficult for many businesses because of disconnected systems. "AI cannot fix it. Connecting the data and automating the flow can," Edwards said.

The same principle applies to decision-making for complex shipments involving multiple routes, carriers, and regulations. Edwards said that many decisions were not judgemental, but repeatable steps that follow rules. Automation can handle this when the data is linked, removing much of the workload.

AI can then help by flagging conflicting requirements, suggesting routing alternatives, and warning about likely exceptions. Edwards stressed that the quality of these recommendations depends on the data being utilised. Many forwarders operate systems that were never designed to work together across different languages and regulatory environments. As a result, applying AI to fragmented information can produce inconsistent or incorrect recommendations. "A single shipment record shared across sales, operations, compliance, and finance, is the prerequisite," Edwards highlighted.

Cyber security is another area the firms need to consider as they implement AI. He also identified three key risks: First, every

Firms need to be careful about how they use generative AI tools with supply chain information

AI tool added to a business creates another connection that needs to be secured, increasing the surface area for something to go wrong. Second, data may leave the business when the shipment information is sent to a third-party AI provider for processing. In such cases, the security of that provider becomes part of the company's own security. Third, AI itself can be manipulated. Document processing tools, for example, can be fooled by forging paperwork, if the appropriate checks are not in place.

These risks are not a reason to avoid AI, but a reason to approach the technology with the same discipline as any other critical system, Edwards commented. The companies need to be careful about how they use generative AI tools with sensitive supply chain information.

Public AI tools should not be used for information containing rates, commercial terms or shipment details unless an enterprise agreement excludes the data from training. Wherever possible, Edwards suggested using AI within the operational platform so that the data does not leave the business.

Policies, employee training, and controls preventing sensitive information from being pasted into public AI tools are also important. "Assume anything pasted into a public tool leaves the business for good," Edwards said, signing off.

AI SNAPSHOTS

- 22% have AI at scale
- 95% of GenAI pilots saw no return
- Clean data comes first
- Automation delivers early gains
- AI helps spot exceptions
- Data security is critical

SUMEA International opens logistics and trade hub in Jafza

SUMEA International has opened a 12,000 sqm logistics and trade hub in Jafza. The facility will serve as the firm's regional HQ and support cargo flow to 75 nations. The hub will enable product sourcing, shipment consolidation, and re-export ops from a single location, fortifying supply chain linkage across Asia and ME.

Oman and Philippines boost Gulf–ASEAN trade links

As businesses look for links between the Gulf and Southeast Asia, Oman and the Philippines are stepping up efforts to expand trade, improve logistics linkage, and fortify regional supply chains. The move reflects a push by both nations to create faster trade routes, attract investment, and improve rapid cargo movement.

CT Bureau

A key focus is the development of trade corridors connecting the Sultanate of Oman's location in the Gulf with the Philippines' access to ASEAN markets. The move comes as the two nations work to expand economic cooperation through the Oman–Philippines Strategic Council.

Maria Theresa Lazaro, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Philippines, said Oman's role as a gateway to the Gulf and the Philippines' position in Southeast Asia could support stronger trade links between the two nations.

For the logistics sector, cooperation could create opportunities for improved movement of goods between the Middle East and Asia. Connections between ports, transport networks, and trade routes can help businesses access new markets and support more efficient supply chains.

The Sultanate's ports, including its facilities along the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, provide access to major shipping routes, while the Philippines' location offers linkage to Southeast Asian economies. The combination of these networks could support flow of commodities and manufactured goods.

Digitalisation is one area being considered to support trade growth. Cooperation in AI, cyber security, digital infrastructure, data centres, and digital trade can help improve supply chain visibility, simplify processes, and enable smoother cross-border transactions.

(L to R) Maria Theresa Lazaro, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Philippines and Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, Foreign Minister, Oman

The partnership comes as supply chains continue to focus on diversification and faster trade routes

The two nations are looking to expand cooperation in agriculture, fisheries and food security. These sectors could drive more trade flows, particularly through improved logistics systems for handling and transporting goods.

The partnership comes as global supply chains continue to focus on diversification, regional connectivity and faster trade routes. Stronger Oman–Philippines links could provide businesses with options for sourcing, transportation and market access between the Gulf region and the Southeast Asia.

With trade and logistics identified as key areas of cooperation, both nations are working towards creating stronger economic connections that support the movement of goods, services and investment.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Stronger Gulf–ASEAN trade links
- New logistics corridors
- Improved cargo connectivity
- Digital trade expansion
- Port and supply chain cooperation
- Focus on food, security, and agriculture
- Better access to regional markets
- Stronger Middle East–Asia connectivity

Drones move from pilot projects to cargo reality

With the capability to support deliveries to remote areas, drones are emerging as a new tool for smarter cargo movement. In an interview, Rashid Mattar Al Manai, Chief Executive Officer, LODD Autonomous, highlighted how drones can complement existing networks and shape the future of cargo transport.

Sonia Sali

Has drone adoption gained momentum, or has the operational model permanently shifted?

Drone logistics is regaining momentum. We are seeing growing interest in using drones for deliveries in situations where traditional cargo transportation methods are difficult, expensive or not feasible to serve, including remote communities, offshore operations, and medical deliveries.

The operational model has matured from demonstrations to solutions addressing real logistics gaps. The UAE has been proactive in developing progressive regulations, enabling innovative solutions, and creating the right environment for safe adoption. The next phase will focus on certified, reliable, and cost-effective services integrated into existing logistics networks.

Q Can drones complement cargo operations?

Yes, drones can complement cargo operations. While air cargo frequently depends on scheduled wide-body aircraft and infrastructure, drones such as Hili can operate dynamically, linking logistics hubs faster and at a lower cost. They are effective for short distances and

ferrying time-critical shipments that do not require a large aircraft's capacity. This flexibility can improve movement of medical supplies, spare parts, e-commerce, and other cargo. Rather than replacing air freight, drones can strengthen the wider logistics network by providing faster and more efficient links between airports, warehouses, distribution centres, and remote locations.

How will drones fit into logistics operations over the next 5–10 years?

Over the next 5–10 years, drones will become the mainstream of the logistics sector. In the UAE, tens of thousands of motorcycles were delivered to customers, contributing to road hazards, accidents, and emissions.

Smart cities can reduce this dependence by integrating drones and unmanned ground vehicles for safer and cleaner last-mile.

For middle-mile logistics, air corridors will link logistics hubs, enabling faster, and frequent cargo movement. Integrating drones across last- and middle-mile operations will create an efficient ecosystem for moving cargo shipments — locally and regionally — thereby complementing trucks and aircraft rather than replacing them.

Rashid Mattar Al Manai
Chief Executive Officer
LODD Autonomous

How can drone operators ensure reliable performance in extreme climatic conditions?

Reliability in such conditions must be designed into the aircraft and its autonomous systems from the outset. At LODD, we consider extreme heat, dust, and high winds through specialised materials, protected air inlets, effective filtration, thermal management, and robust navigation, and communication systems. These capabilities are validated through ground and flight testing under representative regional conditions. Drones such as Hili are undergoing a certification programme to ensure the highest level of safety, implementing aviation safety requirements of the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority, and aligned with global standards. This ensures reliable and effective autonomous cargo operations.

Regulatory frameworks should reflect the size, complexity, and operational risk of each aircraft

How can airports ensure cargo operations and supply chain continuity during security concerns?

Cargo drones can strengthen supply chain continuity during such periods by reducing dependence on major airports. Unlike traditional air freight, they can move shipments between approved logistics hubs without requiring airport infrastructure or wide-body aircraft.

This creates alternative routes for essential goods and time-critical cargo when airport capacity is restricted. Supported by secure air corridors, distributed landing sites, real-time tracking, and close coordination with aviation and security authorities, drones like Hili can help ensure seamless movement of goods during high-threat periods. They complement air freight by adding flexibility, redundancy, and resilience to the wider logistics network.

What regulatory norms are a must to balance drone safety, innovation, and logistics growth?

Regulatory frameworks should reflect the size, complexity, and operational risk of each aircraft. Small drones can follow a risk-based approach using norms such as the SORA, with needs tailored to their environment and mission. Larger cargo aircraft such as Hili undergo a certification programme like conventional ones, covering airworthiness, systems safety, cyber security, command-and-control links, and operational approval. Regulations must enable beyond-visual-line-of-sight (BVLOS) and safe airspace integration. Collaboration between regulators, manufacturers, and operators will ensure safety, while enabling commercial growth of autonomous logistics.

AT A GLANCE

- Advances autonomous cargo solutions
- Enables faster, smarter deliveries
- Supports remote and urgent shipments
- Connects logistics hubs efficiently
- Built for Middle East conditions

Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER

2–3 **World Cold Chain Expo 2026**
Dubai, UAE

8–9 **International Conference on Smart Ports and Maritime Logistics**
Dubai, UAE

9–10 **The Logistics World Summit & Expo Americas**
Mexico

15–16 **2nd GCC Supply Chain, Procurement & Contracts Conference**
Abu Dhabi, UAE

15–17 **Air Cargo Handling Logistics 2026**
Athens, Greece

16–18 **Logistics & Warehousing Show Asia**
Bangkok, Thailand

20–23 **CSCMP Edge Supply Chain Conference & Exhibition 2026**
Colorado, USA

29–30 **Supply Chain Europe 2026**
Amsterdam, Netherlands

29 Sept –1 Oct **Transport Middle East 2026**
Abu Dhabi, UAE

OCTOBER

5–6 **Gartner Supply Chain Planning Summit 2026**
London, UK

6–7 **Logistics & Mobile Robotics Summit**
Germany

6 **FlyPharma Copenhagen 2026**
Denmark

6–8 **IATA World Safety and Operations Conference 2026**
Istanbul, Türkiye

8 **Global Trade Finance Expo**
Dubai, UAE

For more information contact: talk@ddppl.com
The dates shown on the Events calendar are subject to change. Please refer to EventTalk in **CARGOTALK** to track the changes in dates

Egypt redraws trade map with 8 corridors

Cargo flow across Egypt will see new avenues as the country announces eight logistics corridors linking ports, industrial zones, dry ports, and production areas to improve links between Europe, the Gulf, and Africa.

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The corridors are part of Egypt's shift towards developing connected transport networks that combine road, rail, maritime, and logistics infrastructure to support cross-border trade. The projects aim to improve freight connectivity and create more efficient routes for goods moving through the region.

The eight corridors include Arish–Taba, Sokhna–Alexandria, Safaga–Qena–Abu Tartour, Cairo–Alexandria, Tanta–Mansoura–Damietta, Gargoub–Sallum, Cairo–Aswan–Abu Simbel, and Bernice–Aswan–East Oweinat–Kufra–N'Djamena.

Kamel El-Wazir
Transport Minister
Egypt

These routes may back faster cargo flow by providing links between production centres, ports, and markets

"The corridors will connect the Red Sea and ports in the Mediterranean with industrial, agricultural, mining areas, dry ports, and logistics centres. The Bernice–Aswan–East Oweinat–Kufra–N'Djamena corridor is likely to improve links between Egypt, Libya, Chad, and Central Africa through the development of the Egypt–Chad road via Libya," said Kamel El-Wazir, Transport Minister, Egypt. The corridors may improve access to major economic zones by creating direct connections between production areas and export gateways. By linking ports with inland industrial, agricultural, and mining centres, the network aims to support faster cargo flow and reduce transport challenges for businesses moving goods across the region.

EUROPE–GULF

Egypt is developing two regional trade routes aimed at linking Europe with Gulf markets. The Northern Arab Trade Corridor will connect Europe with Levant countries, including Jordan, Iraq, and Syria, through the Arish–Taba route. The Southern Arab Trade Corridor will connect Europe with Saudi Arabia and Gulf markets through Safaga Port and onward to NEOM.

These routes may back faster cargo flow by providing more transport links between production centres, ports, and global markets. They will integrate with larger trade networks, including the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor, China's Belt, Road Initiative, and the Iraq–Türkiye Development Road. Egypt has activated the UN–backed TIR customs transit system, which cuts road transport costs by up to 40 per cent and cut border crossing times by up to 80 per cent.

DHL boosts Middle East–China cargo capacity

DHL Express has launched a daily Boeing 767F linking Shanghai, Bangkok, Bahrain, and Brussels. This service adds up to 50 tonnes of daily capacity. The service fortifies Bahrain's role in DHL's network and adds capacity for shipments between key Asian and ME markets. The service will give shippers options for moving heavier and time-critical cargo between China and the Middle East. It supports DHL's Heavyweight Express offering, which handles larger shipments through its global time-definite network.

Europe–ME road freight link launched by KLN

KLN Logistics has launched a new road freight corridor linking Europe with the Middle East, offering door-to-door transit times for 15–25 days, said Martin Stoekenbroek, Managing Director, EMEA, KLN. The 10,500-km route connects European markets with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, and Egypt. The new service gives shippers an option to move cargo between the two regions as the firms look for more flexible transport solutions. Positioned between ocean and air cargo in terms of cost and speed, the road service can help businesses maintain supply chains while managing changing trade conditions.

QR Cargo expands TechLift with VRR containers

Qatar Airways Cargo has added Van Riemsdijk Rotterdam's (VRR) specialised RGX and RZY containers to its TechLift service for ferrying semiconductor equipment. The containers are designed to protect machinery during air transport. The RZY 16ft and RGX 20ft containers have climate-control systems and shock-absorption features. They are certified for main-deck carriage on QR Cargo's Boeing 777Fs. The move comes as semiconductor manufacturers and suppliers need to ferry large and high-value equipment.

CEVA grows MENA supply chain network with Fattal

CEVA Logistics has completed its acquisition of Lebanon-based Fattal Group, fortifying its logistics and distribution network across the MENA region, said Rodolphe Saadé, Chairman and CEO, CMA CGM Group. The deal expands CEVA's capabilities beyond freight and contract logistics by adding Fattal's regional distribution business across consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, beauty, and fashion. The acquisition supports the CMA CGM Group's strategy of building an integrated supply chain network by combining ocean, air, land transport, warehousing, and last-mile distribution. By bringing Fattal's distribution infra into its network, CEVA aims to provide end-to-end logistics services, while improving efficiency across markets.

GWC opens retail facility at Logistics Village Qatar

GWC Group has signed a 15-year lease with Safari Shopping Centre to open a retail facility at Logistics Village Qatar, said Syed Maaz, CCO, GWC Group. The project includes a 3,613 sqm shopping centre and 5,000 sqm of parking. The new facility is likely to provide essential services for businesses, warehouse operators, and employees working at the logistics hub, backing daily operations and improving workforce convenience. A 15-year commitment from one of Qatar's established retail groups reflects the trust, scale, quality, and long-term value built into LVQ. This pact brings retail and community amenities to people who live and operate within our infrastructure daily.

Hong Kong Air Cargo's Mumbai freighter service

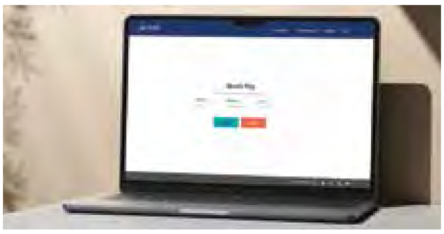
Hong Kong Air Cargo has started a dedicated freighter service from Mumbai, adding capacity between India and Hong Kong. Launched two months after Aeroprime Group became the airline's Cargo GSSA in India, the service will support exports from Mumbai and provide access to onward global markets, said Abhishek Goyal, Executive Director, Aeroprime Group. The launch highlighted Mumbai as a cargo gateway, said Raymond Chen, Vice President, Commercial, Hong Kong Air Cargo.

Swissport opens cargo facility in Tanzania

Swissport has opened a 630 sqm temperature-controlled cargo facility at Kilimanjaro International Airport in Tanzania, adding cold chain capacity for East Africa's perishables trade. The facility can handle up to 13,000 tonnes of cargo annually and includes four chillers and a freezer for temperature-sensitive shipments. The facility will support exports from Tanzania's Northern Circuit, a horticulture-producing region. It handles flowers, fresh produce, seafood and meat, pharmaceuticals, and other temperature-sensitive cargo.

Digital payment option in Menzies Aviation portal

Menzies Aviation has launched Quick Pay on its MACH customer portal in partnership with PayCargo, allowing cargo users to view Air Waybill charges and make payments through PayCargo, said Rory Fidler, SVP Cargo Technology, Menzies Aviation. The new payment function reduces manual steps in the cargo payment process, which can help shorten the time between shipment arrival, payment and release. Users can use an existing PayCargo account or complete the transaction without setting up an account. Quick Pay adds to MACH's existing shipment tracking and cargo network information tools. The portal has been deployed across 49 airports and has processed 1.6 million Air Waybills. For cargo handlers, moving payment processes online can improve shipment visibility.



Amazon Air adds Odyssey in AAC new cargo livery

Amazon Air has introduced Odyssey, its first factory-built Boeing 767-300F in the Amazon Air Cargo (AAC) livery, joining sister aircraft Zenith and Soar. The new freighter marks a step in the company's fleet development as it expands its air cargo operations. The aircraft is part of Amazon's move towards freighter capacity to support its growing logistics network. Amazon Air operates 100 freighters through airline partners, linking markets across North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. The new aircraft comes as Amazon continues to expand its services for third-party forwarders and gives the company a vital role in moving cargo beyond its shipments linked to its ops.

Air Canada Cargo is IATA CEIV lithium battery certified

Air Canada Cargo has received IATA's CEIV Lithium Batteries certification, validating its procedures for the safe handling, storage, and transportation of lithium battery shipments, said Janet Wallace, MD, Cargo Operations and Transformation, Air Canada. The certification covers cargo operations and includes an assessment of the carrier's facility at Montréal–Trudeau International Airport. The certification comes as demand for air transport of lithium batteries grows across sectors including consumer electronics, medical technology, electric vehicles, and energy storage. She said the certification reflects the company's focus on safe handling and operational standards.

NAM adds fifth Boeing 747-400F at Liege Airport

Network Airline Management (NAM) has added a fifth Boeing 747-400F to its fleet, with the converted freighter joining operations from its main hub at Liege Airport. The aircraft entered service at July-end and increases NAM's fleet to five freighters, all operated by Air Atlanta. The more capacity comes as NAM sees demand for air cargo for perishables and e-commerce shipments. The aircraft has operated flights to Sharjah, Liege, Lagos, Accra, Entebbe, and Nairobi. NAM stated the fifth freighter to support general cargo movement.

Lufthansa Cargo digitises import customs process

Lufthansa Cargo is joining allivate's FAIR@Link platform to digitalise import customs processes at Frankfurt Airport. Its FRA-OS module will initially cover e-commerce and general cargo handled through the Neutral Cargo Transfer Point (NFÜP), allowing shipments to reach forwarders faster. FRA-OS brings customs information together and provides shipment tracking from the aircraft to customs-bonded warehouses. This allows forwarders to present cargo to customs at a later stage rather than after landing. The change can remove a processing step for eligible shipments of the Lufthansa Cargo.

MSC Air Cargo orders five Boeing 777-8 freighters

MSC Air Cargo has ordered five Boeing 777-8Fs, with deliveries expected to begin in the early 2030s. The aircraft will add long-haul capacity to the carrier's network as it plans growth in global air cargo, said Jannie Davel, CEO, MSC Air Cargo. MSC Air Cargo began operations in 2022 and operates seven Boeing 777-200Fs serving gateways across Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The new aircraft will support the carrier's plans to expand capacity and link its network with more international markets.

Teleport to launch e-comm hub at Melbourne Avalon

Teleport will establish an e-commerce hub and air freight operations at Melbourne Avalon Airport, moving online retail shipments from China. Phase I is likely to start in the second half of 2026, adding another gateway for growing cross-border e-commerce flows into Australia, said Pete Chareonwongsak, CEO, Teleport. The AirAsia-affiliated logistics firm flies cargo into Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth from Asian markets, including China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The Avalon operation will handle e-commerce cargo from platforms such as Shein and Temu. He said the partnership will fortify the firm's network in Oceania, adding Avalon's capacity, turnaround times and flexibility made it suitable for handling e-commerce.

LOT Cargo secures IATA CEIV Pharma recertification

LOT Cargo has secured IATA CEIV Pharma recertification, confirming that its processes, infrastructure, and handling procedures continue to meet the requirements of the IATA CEIV Pharma programme. The recertification supports the airline's handling of temperature-sensitive pharma and healthcare shipments throughout the logistics chain. For pharma cargo, consistent temperature control, and handling are vital to protect product quality during transport. Maintaining the IATA certification provides a framework for LOT Cargo's pharma cargo operations and supports confidence among shippers and logistics partners handling sensitive healthcare products.

Movements

OMAN LOGISTICS ASSOCIATION
Muscat, Oman

Juma Al Maskari has been appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors, Oman Logistics Association. A veteran experienced in logistics operations, business development, project management and stakeholder engagement, Al Maskari will work with stakeholders to support the development of Oman's logistics sector.

TAD LOGISTICS
Dubai, UAE

Amin El Halabi has been appointed Deputy Chief Executive Officer at TAD Logistics. He will work with the Chief Executive Officer and the leadership team to drive the firm's growth and expand its integrated logistics solutions across existing and emerging markets. Halabi will support the company's efforts to deliver value to partners.

FL TECHNICS
Vilnius, Lithuania

Saulius Bajarunas has been appointed Chief Executive Officer at FL Technics, effective 1 September. In his new role, he will lead FL Technics' global operations and development with a focus on supporting the firm's continued growth and maintaining high standards of quality and reliability. He will work with teams across the firm's global network.

JETTAINER
Frankfurt, Germany

Moritz Köhler has been appointed Chief Operating Officer at Jettainer. He will lead Jettainer's global operations, be responsible for fleet management and the network of ULD Control Desks. Köhler will focus on improving operational processes through digitalisation while increasing ULD fleet availability and fortifying operational resilience.

BAHRAIN AIRPORT COMPANY
Manama, Bahrain

Ahmed Mohamed Janahi has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Airport Company. He will be responsible for leading the firm with a focus on maintaining safe and efficient airport operations. He will also fortify coordination with partners and support the development of Bahrain International Airport.

DUBAI AIRPORTS
Dubai, UAE

Kan Ni has been promoted from Vice President, Airport Operations Control Centre to Senior Vice President, Airport Operations, Dubai Airports. He will lead airport operations, focusing on safe and efficient daily operations across the airport. He will support coordination and decision-making as Dubai Airports gears up for the next phase of growth.

IATA
Geneva, Switzerland

Saadia Zahidi has been appointed the first woman Director-General of IATA, w.e.f. 1 November. Zahidi will lead IATA's work with member airlines, governments, and industry partners, strengthen advocacy for the airline industry, and support the development of global standards and services with a focus on innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth.

CARGONET
Manchester, UK

Kirsty McAndrew has been appointed Regional Sales Manager at Cargonet. Based in Manchester, McAndrew will work with forwarders across Northern England, helping the users and partners access Cargonet's neutral wholesale air freight and courier services. Her appointment comes as Cargonet invests in its Manchester operations.


ETIHAD
CARGO
WAYBILL NO. 607 7218 5970
FROM:
BRU
SHIP TO:
PHARMALIFE
It's never just an address,
which is why we go beyond borders with our partners to deliver