

Middle East's leading cargo monthly

November 2024

# CARGO

# talk

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**PUBLISHER**

Sanjeet: sanjeet@sanjeet.ae

**EDITORIAL TEAM**

Devika Jeet  
 devika@ddppl.com

Nisha Verma  
 nisha.verma@ddppl.com

Dr. Shehara Rizly  
 shehara@ddppl.com

Ritika Arora Bhola  
 ritika.arora@ddppl.com

**DESK EDITOR**

WN Murthi: wn.murthi@ddppl.com

**ADVERTISING TEAM**

Crisna De Guzman: crisna@ddppl.com  
 Rajith Fernando: rajith@ddppl.com  
 Mobile: +971529208684  
 Angelito Villeza: angelito@ddppl.com

**MARKETING SERVICES**

Jaspreet Kaur: jaspreet.kaur@ddppl.com

**DESIGN** Nityanand Misra

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Anil Kharbanda, Ramesh Gupta

**ADVERTISEMENT DESIGNER**

Nitin Kumar, Aditya Kumar Singh,  
 Anil Khatri Chhetri



UAE : Z1-02, P.O. Box 9348, Saif Zone,  
 Sharjah, UAE, Ph: +971 6 5528954,  
 Fax: +971 6 5528956  
 E-mail: uae@ddppl.com

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4

### Cybersecurity, strong firewalls gain significance



14  
**ACA 2024 to  
 dazzle again**



18  
**SolitAir cargo  
 carrier takes off**



20  
**Dubai Customs  
 displays new tech**



23  
**Emirates' five  
 more freighters**



36  
**New tool to  
 improve logistics**



37  
**Alsi Global's  
 logistics solutions**

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# PROTECTING SENSITIVE cargo data against cyber-threats

Following advanced digitalisation, efforts have been made to ensure cybersecurity measures, which have become an important aspect of the air cargo industry in order to keep operational data safe.





 Dr. Shehara Rizly

At the recently concluded GITEX Dubai, various experts shared their views on the important issue of cybersecurity. According to the experts, Artificial Intelligence is becoming the game changer. It was shared that with global cybercrime damages projected to reach US\$10.5 trillion annually by 2025, the international tech community is determined to ignite a paradigm


Alongside all the partnerships across the world, step in various threats or cyber-attacks, hence one of the focal points is to be aware and keep updating technology at all times.

Although the air cargo industry has its vulnerabilities, usage of advanced technology is air cargo has become a game changer. Technology is changing fast today and

ensuring the adaptation has brought about resilience in the air cargo industry.

Awareness is vital as only then can the cyber-threats be identified and taken control of to ensure that nothing affects the last-mile delivery systems. One of the focal ways to mitigate the threats is if companies build a cybersecurity culture by ensuring security and

privacy first as there is a lot of data across the industry. There should be stringent practices that need to be introduced as at the end of the day it is a lot of data, which is vulnerable. If it goes into the wrong hands, it could be detrimental to the firms.

 spoke with industry experts on their take about going forward.

***Strict practices must be introduced, as the cargo data is vulnerable, and if it falls into the wrong hands, it could be detrimental***

shift through reinvigorated determination. This universal attitude was on full display at GITEX GLOBAL as top CISOs, CIOs, and GRC leaders converged with a unified mission: Establish the foremost line of defence globally.



## Tackling system exposure and data breaches

In air cargo, cybersecurity risks include system vulnerabilities, data breaches, and unauthorised access. With the integration of IoT devices and interlinked systems, cargo operations are exposed to potential malware attacks, which could disrupt services and compromise data. Compliance with ISO 27001 for information security, IATA Cargo-XML and e-AWB,



**Martin Bremen**  
Managing Director  
Dimos

**“Cybersecurity is not an option for air cargo—it is a necessity to ensure seamless operations and data safety.”**

and GDPR ensures cargo operations meet data protection and cybersecurity needs. These standards play a crucial role.”

## Operators use many controls to keep data safe

Cybersecurity is vital due to its reliance on digital systems. Risks include data breaches, ransomware attacks, and operational disruptions. They can compromise sensitive cargo information and cause delays. Adhering to IATA norms and ISO/IEC 27001 is essential to



**Razmal Assen**  
Executive Director, India,  
UAE & Kenya  
Scanwell Logistics

**“Adhering to IATA norms and ISO/IEC 27001 is essential to help establish safe cybersecurity practices.”**

help establish cybersecurity practices, ensuring data integrity, smooth and secure operations. To protect data, operators use encryption, secure data transmission protocols, and strict access controls. These measures ensure data remains safe during storage and transmission.”

## Vital to use right standard to protect sensitive data

There are many standards and norms, which have helped in most cases as we could see in the recent outage, which occurred in some parts of the world, but we were the least affected in the UAE. Data protection is a key area, which requires a lot of support as we deal with sensitive cargo information, especially between storage and transmission. Data will be the talk of the town going into



**Sathish Babu**  
Country Manager, UAE,  
EFL Global UAE

**“Data protection needs strong support as we deal with sensitive data, especially between storage and transmission.”**

the next decade. While tracking and managing cargo systems, it is essential to use the correct portal.”



## NACH protects each link against cyber-threats

In the fast-moving world of air cargo, every operation is critical—and so is cybersecurity. From cargo transport to freight forwarding, charter services, and aircraft on ground recovery, National Air Cargo Holdings ensures all links in the chain are protected against cyber threats such as business email compromise, ransomware, and social engineering. We align with ICAO's



**Anilash Nair**  
Manager, Networks and Partnership, National Air Cargo

**“In the world of air cargo, every operation is critical and so also is cybersecurity to keep sensitive data safe.”**

Annex 17, IATA's Cargo Security Manual, and UAE's GCAA National Civil Aviation Cybersecurity Policy.”

## Firewalls, VPNs protect tracking, sensitive data

Cybersecurity in air cargo operations is crucial due to the sensitive nature of data involved. The risks include unauthorised access to cargo tracking systems, data breaches, and ransomware attacks that can disrupt ops. These risks can lead to financial losses and



**Yousif Najim**  
CEO  
Orbit Logistics

**“The critical cyber risks can lead to sensitive data theft, financial losses and disrupt ops.”**

compromise sensitive cargo information. In terms of compliance, standards and norms include ISO 27001 for information security management and National Institute of Standards and Technology Cybersecurity Framework. Adhering to these standards helps organisations implement robust security measures.”

## Data encryption key to enhance security of firms

Air cargo is a key component in the transportation and logistics, with impact on multiple sectors across the economy. The sector faces cybersecurity challenges because of the sensitivity of the data being handled. Privacy is a big issue as the companies need to keep track and accountability of the process, and at the same time, be resistant to attacks capable of extracting this data.



**Dr. Víctor Mateu**  
Acting Chief Researcher,  
Technology Innovation Institute

**“Privacy is a big issue as cargo companies need to keep track and accountability of the entire process.”**

Encryption of their databases is a key element to enhance the security and resilience of the system.”





# VOTING

## Closes

on 5<sup>th</sup> November

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# ARABIAN CARGO AWARDS

11 November 2024

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# Cargo drones: **New frontier** in supply chain solutions

Drones are emerging as an alternative to conventional methods in supply chain, offering faster and cost-effective solution for various logistics challenges. Capable to bypass traffic, access remote or hard-to-reach areas, and automate tasks, cargo drones are transforming last-mile delivery and transportation logistics, say industry experts.



**T** Dr. Shehara Rizly

Beyond delivery, drones are enhancing warehouse operations by automating tasks such as inventory management, stock monitoring, and barcoding. With cameras and sensors, drones can perform real-time checks, ensuring inventory accuracy and reducing human errors. This leads to faster TAT and efficient warehouse management. Cargo drones are also improving supply chain visibility. They can track shipments in transit and provide data-driven insights to optimise logistics operations. Infrastructure inspection is another area where drones are valuable, as they can quickly assess the condition of trans-

port systems, ensuring their safety and integrity. While challenges such as limited payload, regulatory restrictions, and weather dependency remain, the continuous advancement in drone tech-

capabilities, they enhance supply chain visibility and reduce human errors. There are a few concerns too, which needs to be accessed such as battery life where the flight time of the drones maybe limited, and

efficiency, and accessibility are critical.

However, when it comes to last-mile delivery the feasibility of using drones becomes quite a task as we need to weigh the pros and cons. Among those, the more visible one is the cost followed by distance and vulnerability. For short haul operations it may be an apt option, however, coupled with an additional cost. At the same time, safety could also be compromised as it is open to both physical and technical dangers. In remote areas there can be unforeseen dangers in the surrounding areas such as trees that have outgrown or something similar and it may be able to be hacked to change the route.

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***Cargo drones are improving supply chain visibility. They can track shipments in transit and provide data-driven insights to optimise logistics operations***

---

nology is setting the stage for them to transform the supply chain, offering unparalleled speed and efficiency. Equipped with advanced sensors and real-time data capa-

another concern is the weather. Despite these challenges, cargo drones are becoming a viable option for certain aspects of the supply chain, particularly where speed, ef-

## Education and training must to handle drones

The only area where this would make sense is remote geographical locations or areas without proper road coverage. The current setup of using efficient road vehicles is by far effective in deliveries. Most drones have issues with payload capabilities versus performance compared to a road vehicle as an electric vehicle. As always, employees need education and training on such

**“Drones have issues with payload capabilities versus performance. The infrastructure should also be perked up.”**

products alongside legislative awareness. Also, there would need to be some pilot projects to show its technical capabilities.”



**Richard Hall**  
Director, Middle East  
and Asia-Pacific,  
Transport Overseas Group

## Cargo drones can be useful in interior areas

Cargo drones can be a valuable alternative for last-mile delivery, especially in remote or hard-to-reach areas. However, they are not yet ready to replace conventional methods on a larger scale due to limitations in payload capacity and regulations. To raise



**A.S. Farhan**  
Asst. General Manager,  
Freight & Logistics, Al  
Rais Cargo Agencies

**“Drones are not ready to replace conventional methods on larger scale due to limitations in payload capacity.”**

awareness, the industry needs to focus on educating stakeholders through seminars, pilot programmes, and regulatory discussions. Among the factors to be considered the key criteria is the cost, hence it will take some time to understand and estimate costings for such technology.”

## Drones are an alternative to conventional transport

Drones have the potential to serve as an alternative to conventional modes in the supply chain. Looking at the positive side, it will be speedy and efficient, reduce costs, produce fewer emissions and contribute to more sustainable logistics solutions. Drones can access difficult regions such as rural or interior areas. The challenges include limited payload capacity, regulatory



**Shailen Shukla**  
Director, Supply Chain,  
Alesayi Group Kingdom  
of Saudi Arabia

**“Looking at the positive side, it will be speedy, efficient, reduce costs and produce fewer emissions.”**

and safety concerns. Heavy investment is needed to put up infra such as charging, landing, and loading.”



## Drones can easily reach inaccessible regions

Cargo drones hold potential for last-mile delivery, particularly in urban and remote areas. They offer speed, reduced road congestion, and can reach inaccessible locations to traditional vehicles. However, they are best suited for small-package deliveries and may complement rather than fully replace conventional methods. Regulatory frameworks should be established to ensure safe

**“Regulatory frameworks must be set up to ensure safe drone operations, and also awareness programmes.”**

drone operations, and demonstrations of their efficiency in local deliveries can further drive adoption.”



**Abid Hamza**  
General Manager  
Fast Logistics

## Weather can affect drone performance, reliability

Drones are faster, provide faster delivery time and can access remote and interior places where normal delivery resources struggle. Though adopting such new technology in mass involves significant costs and requires extensive training and integration



**Yasser Zahreddine**  
Country General  
Manager, SMSA Express

**“Creating awareness about cargo drones requires broad collaboration with all stakeholders.”**

within transportation companies. Weather, political and geographical conditions in this area can affect drone reliability and performance. Creating awareness about drones requires broad collaboration with all stakeholders, including industry leaders, tech providers, and regulatory bodies.”

## Companies can benefit from faster deliveries

Cargo drones can be a viable alternative to conventional methods in the supply chain. They offer benefits such as faster delivery times, reduced traffic congestion, and access to remote and interior areas. Cargo drones have the potential to revolutionise logistics by providing efficient and cost-effective delivery solutions. To create awareness about the use of cargo drones,

**“To create awareness, educational campaigns in partnership with logistics firms can be effective.”**

initiatives such as educational campaigns, demonstrations, and partnerships with logistics companies can be effective.”



**Yousif Najim**  
CEO  
Orbit Logistics



## There are issues galore when it comes to drones

Cargo drones can support supply chain methods, particularly for last-mile deliveries in remote areas. We can raise awareness through industry workshops, collaborating with government agencies. The UAE is in a good position to lead these initiatives, given its focus on adopting new logistics technologies. There are many instances where a warehouse facility makes



**Mazhar Marzook**  
Cargo Manager, GSA,  
UAE, ATTA Cargo

**“There are many instances where a warehouse facility makes more sense to use drones to keep track of goods.”**

more sense to use drones in terms of keeping track of goods. In a broader environment there are still some challenges.”

## Infrastructure for drones is not up to the mark

Though cargo drones have been deployed, they are present only in certain pockets around the world. On the African continent, in some countries where the road infrastructure is not as good, drones have been deployed to deliver medicines etc. In Dubai, we see



**Nadeem Sultan**  
SVP, Cargo Planning and  
Freighters  
Emirates Skycargo

**“It brings a new challenge when it comes to maintaining safety of civil aviation as well as air traffic”**

many drones flying around. It brings a new challenge when it comes to maintaining safety of civil aviation as well as air traffic.”

## Drone makers, firms, govt to promote safety protocol

Cargo drones have the potential to revolutionise the supply chain by serving as an alternative to conventional transportation methods, especially in hard-to-reach areas. However, for this alternative to be truly viable, integrating end-to-end zero trust security,



**Dr. Víctor Mateu**  
Acting Chief Researcher,  
Technology Innovation  
Institute

**“For drones to be truly viable, integrating end-to-end zero trust, security, and resilience are essential.”**

resilience, and advanced safety capabilities into the drones and unmanned traffic management systems is critical. Fostering partnerships between drone manufacturers, logistics companies, and the government must come together to promote protocols prioritising security and resilience.”

## Stringent regulatory infra absent for cargo drones

There are two kinds of drones. One is the regular one, which is used for last-mile delivery. The other is involved in the Nautilus project—large commercial freighters flying on regular manned routes. So, air traffic controllers, when they are dealing with them; they do not differentiate between unmanned and manned aircraft. So those systems are currently in development.



**Ram Menen**  
Founding Member  
Emirates Group and  
Emirates SkyCargo

**“Regulatory infra is a must for drones flying on specific controlled routes. At present, Kenya is leading in drone space.”**

Kenya is leading in the drone space. The regulatory infra is essential to have drones flying on specific controlled routes.” 🇰🇪



# Arabian Cargo Awards 2024 all set to dazzle Middle East **once again** in November

Second edition of Arabian Cargo Awards scheduled on 11 November 2024 in Conrad Hotel, Dubai will celebrate outstanding achievements of air cargo and logistics industry. The ceremony will be attended by industry's most influential personalities.

 CT Bureau

As the countdown begins for the prestigious event, recognising outstanding achievements across industries of air cargo, rail, road, logistics, warehousing, technology, 3PL, and more. Often hailed as the 'Oscars' of the air cargo and logistics industry, the Arabian Cargo Awards have started the nomination process, with a jury-led system that ensures fairness and transparency.

"These awards will set the benchmark in the cargo industry. We recognise and motivate the unsung heroes of the cargo industry, applauding them for their vital services in these challenging times," said SanJeet, Mentor, Arabian Cargo Awards, as he explained the grand event's significance.

With fair and unbiased voting, supported by a system of jury judgment and public internet voting, the event ensures the recognition is truly deserved. The event not only highlights the achievements of individuals and companies but also mirrors the growth and innovation happening in the GCC region's air cargo and logistics sector.

Aqsa Yahya, General Manager, Conrad Hotel, Dubai, shared their excitement "to partner with the Arabian Cargo Awards. This event attracts the top leaders in the cargo and logistics industry, providing an ideal platform



**SanJeet**  
Mentor  
Arabian Cargo Awards



**Amadou Diallo**  
CEO, Middle East & Africa  
DHL Global Forwarding

*With fair and unbiased voting, supported by a system of jury judgement and public internet voting, the event ensures the recognition is truly deserved*



to showcase our commitment to operational excellence and innovation. The event offers a unique opportunity to connect with key industry players, forge new partnerships, and strengthen existing relationships. This ensures Conrad Dubai remains at the forefront of Dubai's logistics and hospitality landscape, supporting the city's reputation as a global trade hub".

With the support of partners such as DHL and Etihad Cargo, the event will host

leading logistics and supply chain companies across the Middle East.

Commenting on the DHL collaboration as the Gold partner at Arabian Cargo Awards 2024, Amadou Diallo, Chief Executive Officer, DHL Logistics Middle East DWC-LLC said, "DHL Global Forwarding Middle East and Africa is thrilled to partner as the Gold Sponsor for the second edition of the prestigious Arabian Cargo Awards. This partnership underscores our commitment to excellence in the cargo industry and our dedication to delivering exceptional logistics solutions to our customers in the Middle East region and beyond. We are honored to support and contribute to the success of this esteemed event."

# WE MOVE IT ALL



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Cargo & Logistics Services

# Air cargo demand **skyrockets** in the Middle East region

The Middle East logistics market is expected to grow at CAGR of 6% up to 2032. The GCC freight and logistics market is likely to touch US\$76 billion by this year-end. The stellar performance of air cargo is underpinned by slow but steady growth in global trade, e-commerce, and capacity maritime constraints, says **Willie Walsh, Director General, IATA**.

**Akash Tyagi**

With a colossal growth in air cargo demand, Middle East is gradually cementing its place as the leading player in the global air cargo. As per the latest report from the Mordor Intelligence, the Middle East air cargo and logistics market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5.80 per cent up to 2032.

The GCC freight and logistics market is likely to touch US\$76 billion by this year-end. In the same period, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) market alone is estimated to reach US\$25.49 billion. These figures demonstrate how the sector is increasing by leaps and bounds in the Middle East. To this end, highly advanced technologies, sophisticated infrastructure, government's initiatives and other crucial factors have also played a vital role.



**Willie Walsh**  
Director General  
IATA

“The Middle East-Europe market performed well rising by 28.9%, ahead of Middle East-Asia route.”

IATA in its data for August revealed the Middle East region has continued to show

robust growth for the ninth consecutive month. In August 2024, the Middle East region contributed 13.5 per cent in cargo tonnes-kilometres year-on-year. The capacity increased 4.0 per cent YoY, with 3.7 per cent rise in the CLF (%-PT) \*2 and 44.5 per cent increase in Load Factor Level. The Middle East-Europe market performed well increasing by 28.9 per cent, ahead of the Middle East-Asia route, which grew by 13.5 per cent year-on-year. “The sector recorded a second consecutive month of record high demand year-to-date. Even with record levels of capacity, yields are up 11.7 per cent on 2023, 2 per cent on the previous month, and 46 per cent above pre-pandemic levels. This performance is underpinned by slow, but steady growth in global trade, booming e-commerce, and continuing capacity constraints on maritime shipping,” Willie Walsh, Director General, IATA said.

Dubai International Airport, Hamad International Airport, Bahrain International Airport, Sharjah International Airport and King Khalid Airport were the major contributors in rise in cargo demand for the Middle East region.

## HAMAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Hamad International Airport has one of the most sophisticated cargo terminals with a capacity to process 1.4 million tonnes of cargo per annum. It handled 1,249,295 tonnes of cargo by the end of July, which saw a 12 per cent growth compared to the same period in 2023. In Q1 2024, the airport handled 626,338 tonnes of cargo, breaking all previous records for handling cargo tonnages at the airport.

## DUBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Dubai International Airport is the busiest airport by inter-



Hamad Int'l Airport



Dubai Int'l Airport







national traffic in the Middle East and second busiest airport in the world. By the end of August 2024, DXB handled 2,162,786 tonnes of cargo, which includes 528,430 tonnes of imported cargo.

### BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Bahrain International Airport features in the list of the most advanced smart airports in the GCC. In August, 20,126 tonnes of cargo was handled, witnessing a growth of 26.8 per cent year-on-year. The first half of 2024 saw a robust

growth from the same period in 2023 with a total handling of 189,799 tonnes of cargo.

### SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Sharjah International Airport is one of the most prominent smart airports in the GCC. It boasts of high-end facilities for cargo and passenger services. It achieved a growth in the cargo handling operations in the first half of 2024, handling a total of 97,000 tonnes of cargo with a demand growth rate of 40.7 per cent. The air-sea cargo operations

saw a rise of 17.5 per cent YoY with a total of 74,000 tonnes.

### KING KHALID INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

King Khalid International Airport is one of the largest airports in the world, in term of allotted land area. It is renowned as one of the most advanced airports in the Middle East boasting cutting-edge technologies and possesses abundance of amenities. Operated by Riyadh Airports Company, the airport witnessed solid cargo tonnages by the end of H1 of 2024.

The combined numbers of the Kingdom's airports for cargo operations in the H1 of 2024 stood at 606,000 tonnes. The volumes of air freight surged 41 per cent from the corresponding period in 2023.

#### FACT FILE

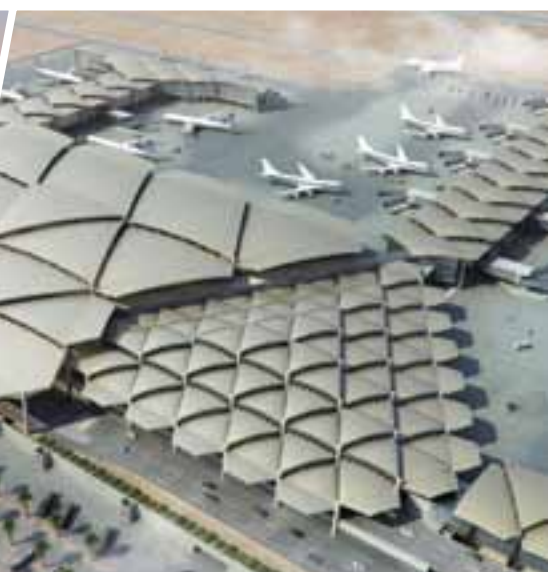
- Even with record levels of cargo capacity, yields are up 11.7 per cent on 2023, 2 per cent on the previous month and 46 per cent above the pre-pandemic levels.



*Bahrain Int'l Airport*



*Sharjah Int'l Airport*



*King Khalid Int'l Airport*

# ‘Middle mile’ cargo airline all set to take off in Middle East

SolitAir is the first scheduled daily cargo airline, which covers Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. **Hamdi Osman, Founder and CEO, SolitAir** spoke about plans for the future in an exclusive interview. We are focused on utilising Boeing 737-800, a narrowbody aircraft for our operations, he adds.

CT Bureau

**H**amdi Osman, Founder and CEO, SolitAir shared their key focus was to address the ‘middle mile’ delivery.

“SolitAir Cargo is here to address the ‘middle mile’ problem. We are proud to be the first scheduled daily cargo airline for the region, covering the Middle East, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and



**Hamdi Osman**  
Founder and CEO,  
SolitAir

**“ We are the first daily carrier, covering the ME, Africa, Indian subcontinent, and Central Asian countries.”**

the Central Asian countries. Our mission is to expand to 50

cities within a six-hour radius from Dubai World Central. Presently, we are focused on utilising Boeing 737-800, a narrowbody aircraft for our operations.

It allows us to carry up to 23 tonnes of cargo and reach our targeted regions within the six-hour window. Looking ahead, we plan to introduce the first electric aircraft within the GCC within the next three years.”



**You spoke about plans involving the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Could you elaborate?**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a key market for us. We are applying for an AOC in KSA to enable us to conduct domestic operations within KSA. Our goal is to serve at least 18 of the KSA's 29 airports. Our first operations will be from DWC to Riyadh, followed by Mumbai and Dhaka.

**When do you expect to launch these operations?**

By 20 October, our first flight will take off from DWC to Riyadh.

**Cybersecurity is crucial in aviation. What are your thoughts on the risks, and how does SolitAir try to mitigate them?**

We plan to address cybersecurity with three key strate-



***Every process is technology-driven, ensuring safety, security, and cybersecurity are constantly monitored***

gies. First, we distinguish between known and unknown customers, which is critical in business-to-business operations. Second, control is vital, especially for operators such as FedEx, UPS, DHL, and Amazon Prime. It is something we prioritise at SolitAir. Lastly, we are a technology firm with transportation at its core. Every process is techno-driven, ensuring safety, security, and cybersecurity are monitored.

**Drones are a hot topic in air cargo for past five to 10 years. How do you see them impacting the industry?**

Until they are tested, and are cost-effective, I do not see drones coming into the mainstream. Electric airplanes may dominate the sector in the next two to three years before drones can truly take off. The cost of operating drones is still high, and the regulatory framework remains uncertain. The end user is not willing to pay a premium for drone delivery unless the value and cost are aligned.

**What is SolitAir's approach to sustainability?**

As a new player in air cargo, we are committed to staying ahead with the latest aircraft and engine technologies. We have signed deals with one in the USA and another in Asia—for 22 aircraft. The first deliveries are expected by the year 2027.

### FACT FILE

- By 20 October, SolitAir's first flight will take off from DWC to Riyadh, the capital of KSA. We have signed deals with two aircraft manufacturers—one in the USA and another in Asia.



# Dubai Customs displays next-gen tech, AI solutions to alter trade

Dubai Customs showcased eight innovative initiatives that rely on technology and AI at the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of GITEX Global at the Dubai World Trade Centre. Highlight was on digital, innovative services and systems, which help accelerate customs processes and reflect its vision of being the world's leading customs administration.



CT Bureau

**H**is Excellency Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Busenad, Director General, Dubai Customs, emphasised Dubai Customs' eagerness to participate annually in GITEX, highlighting it as an opportunity to showcase Dubai Customs' innovative digital transformation and the role it plays in automating customs services through advanced technologies. He further noted that this year's participation would allow them to present initiatives and projects to the business community, trading companies, and logistics sectors, with the aim of exceeding expectations and enhancing the returns on their business activities.



**H.E. Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Busenad**  
*Director General  
 Dubai Customs*

Dubai Customs' projects include key initiatives such as the 'Seamless Inspections', which is a unique effort to accelerate customs inspection processes. Another is 'AI Mu-



“ **The initiatives launched by Customs align with Dubai’s economic agenda by boosting foreign trade.**”

nasig’, a specialised app developed using GenAI to assign the correct Harmonised System codes for customer goods. The

tion of customs procedures for cargo clearance. These initiatives align with Dubai’s economic agenda by boosting foreign trade value, the Director General of Dubai Customs pointed out.

Expressing excitement about meeting a wide range of experts, specialists, solution providers, and investors from across the globe, including diplomatic bodies and foreign business councils, during the event, Dr Busenad said, “GITEEX serves as a perfect

**Dubai Customs initiative offers biz the convenience of having their shipments inspected at their own warehouses**

‘K9 Sustainable Vehicle’ supports customs inspection operations at customs centres to enhance protection against contraband smuggling.

The ‘Octa’ platform acts as a personal customs assistant, powered by AI, to answer customer inquiries related to customs and trade in Dubai and, finally, the ‘Shahin’ project to enable electronic shipment tracking between Dubai’s ports by installing an electronic lead seal. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience a virtual simula-

platform for exchanging insights on how technological shifts can simplify business operations, and it provides an important opportunity to showcase the smart customs procedures and services offered by Dubai Customs to visitors and business owners both locally and globally.”

**FACT FILE**

- Etihad Cargo’s online booking portal has been upgraded to showcase cargo options and advanced capabilities.



**Pact inked to strengthen Dubai as international trade hub**

The Dubai Customs initiative offers businesses the convenience of having their shipments inspected at their own warehouses instead of customs centres, and at a time that suits them, thereby reducing logistics costs and speeding up customs clearance. This change aims to increase operational efficiency and flexibility for companies, improving the overall reliability and effectiveness of the supply chain, while strengthening Dubai’s position as a leading global trade hub. The agreement was signed during GITEEX Global by Mansoor Al Malik, Executive Director, Policies and Legislation Division, and Tarek Abu Yaghi, General Manager of Aramex. Al Malik emphasised that this initiative is in line with Dubai’s economic goals, aiming to streamline foreign trade and improve business practices. He expressed optimism that this innovative solution will positively impact trade operations and contribute to the growth of Dubai’s global commerce. Tarek Abu Yaghi voiced his enthusiasm for the partnership, acknowledging its role in enhancing business operations and highlighting the successful collaboration with Dubai Customs to deliver cutting-edge customs services. He also confirmed that Aramex is committed to supporting the successful implementation of the initiative.





# Dubai Airports to launch world's largest solar installation project

Dubai Airports announced a collaboration with Etihad Clean Energy Development Company, wholly owned subsidiary of DEWA, to launch the solar panel installation project at the airport. This project of 39MWp of clean energy, to be operational by the year 2026, involves installation of 62,904 solar panels across the twin Dubai airports.

 CT Bureau

Dubai Airports and Etihad Energy Services Company have formalised a pact during the World Green Economy Summit organised by the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, and the World Green Economy Organisation. The event was held under patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

The agreement was signed by Paul Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dubai Airports and Dr. Waleed Alnuaimi, CEO, Etihad ESCO. His Excellency Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer said, "This initiative aligns with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's vision to develop Dubai as one of the most sustainable cities in

the world. While our roadmap outlines clear targets of achieving 25 per cent of the energy mix from clean energy sources by 2030, and cent per cent by 2050, we are proactive-

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***The solar panels are likely to offset 23,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum or powering 3,000 homes for a year***

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ly accelerating our efforts. We anticipate surpassing these goals, potentially reaching 27 per cent clean energy capacity as early as 2030, which would enable us to achieve our 2050 vision ahead of schedule. Undoubtedly, innovation and cutting-edge technologies are instrumental in expediting our progress towards a greener future."

This phased project of total 39MWp of clean energy, which will be fully operational by the year 2026, involves the installation of 62,904 solar panels across Dubai International (DXB) and Dubai World Central-Al Maktoum International airports and is set to generate 60,346MWh per annum. It marks a significant stride toward decarbonising airport operations.

The solar panels, which will span passenger terminals and concourses across both airports, are likely to offset 23,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually—equivalent to taking 5,000 cars off the road or powering 3,000 homes for a year. The solar energy generated will meet 6.5 per cent of DXB's power needs and 20 per cent of DWC's, reinforcing the Dubai Airports' long-term vision for a cleaner, smarter, and more sustainable operations.

Griffiths said, "Airports are significant energy consumers,

but with that comes an opportunity and responsibility to drive real change. For us, this is not just about installing solar panels; it is about embedding sustainability into the core of everything we do. Every kilowatt we generate from renewable sources brings us closer to shrinking our carbon footprint and future-proofing our operations."

Dr. Alnuaimi remarked, "Our partnership with Dubai Airports plays a pivotal role in our strategy to accelerate Dubai's sustainability agenda. By broadening the solar footprint and implementing transformative initiatives such as Shams Dubai, we are not only reducing energy demand but also driving the adoption of sustainable energy solutions across the emirate. This project, and others like it, demonstrates our commitment to building an integrated ecosystem that aligns with Dubai's vision for a greener, more energy-efficient future." 

# Emirates orders **five more 777Fs**, fleet increases to 21

Emirates has placed multi-year lease extension for five more Boeing 777 freighters to be delivered from 2025-2026. Together with its previous orders, Emirates now has 14 Boeing 777Fs pending delivery from Boeing until end 2026, says **H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive, Emirates Airline and Group.**

**T** CT Bureau

Emirates has signed a multi-year lease extension with Dubai Aerospace Enterprise for four Boeing 777Fs in its existing fleet. Based on these investments, Emirates SkyCargo expects to operate a fleet of 21 production-built Boeing 777Fs by December 2026, expanding its existing fleet of 11 units. This apart, Emirates also remains invested in converting 10 passenger Boeing 777-300ERs into freighters for further capacity and fleet growth

“We are investing in new freighters to meet growing demand and provide customers around the world with more flexibility, connectivity, and options to leverage market opportunity. Demand for Emirates’ air cargo services has been booming. This reflects Dubai’s prominence as a preferred and trusted global logistics hub, and the success



**His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum**  
Chairman and Chief Executive,  
Emirates Airline and Group

**“Demand for Emirates’ cargo services is booming. This reflects Dubai as a preferred global logistics hub.”**

of Emirates SkyCargo’s bespoke solutions addresses the


needs of shippers in different sectors,” His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive, Emirates Airline and Group, said.

“Emirates continues to set the direction for our industry, and we appreciate the trust they have placed in the Boeing wide-body family to serve as the backbone of their global fleet,” Stephanie Pope, President and CEO, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, said. “We are proud to support Emirates SkyCargo’s growth as it relies on the performance and versatility of our 777Fs to connect the world,” she added.

Even as it inducts new freighters into its operations, Emirates’ cargo division will continue to harness the airline’s all wide-body passenger fleet to facilitate the fast, reliable and efficient movement of goods worldwide, offering customers more flexibility

with a fleet mix comprised of 777s, 777-Fs, 747Fs, A350s, and A380s.

The Dubai government’s plans are all set to expand Al Maktoum International airport (DWC) to create the world’s largest hub in terms of capacity. The Dubai International Airport will be able to process as many as 12 million tonnes of cargo annually, supporting the growth of the Logistics District, which has been planned as a global base for global cargo and shipping companies, and part of Dubai’s masterplan to become the pre-eminent multi-modal cargo hub for air, sea and land connections.

As part of its vision for the next era of its growth, Emirates plans to decide by the end of this calendar year on its future freighter fleet for 2028-29 and beyond, with the Boeing 777-8F and Airbus A350-1000F as contenders. 



# Middle East air cargo leaders discuss **cybersecurity** & tech

Air cargo leaders from the Middle East attended the special session organised by the Emirates Airline along with Museum of the future. Some of the topics in focus were cybersecurity, impact of the various disruptive technologies and introduction of drones to the market once again for supply chain.





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### ACCREDITATIONS



## NAFL : National Association of Freight & Logistics

P.O. Box 60944 Dubai, United Arab Emirates Tel: +971 4 3431112, Reyan Abdullah +971 56 146 5001

Register at [info@nafl.ae](mailto:info@nafl.ae) or [marketing@nafl.ae](mailto:marketing@nafl.ae), [www.nafl.ae](http://www.nafl.ae)

# Innovation takes **centre stage** as entities showcase future projects

Technology exhibition ended with government entities in the UAE showcasing some amazing experiences. Dubai Customs, Abu Dhabi digital, RTA, DEWA and ICP among others showcased their new ventures of the future so that they could share the knowledge with the world.







# Next wave of **digital conversion** for air cargo

Digital technology is transforming cargo and logistics industry, improving efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness. It is the cargo and logistics industry, which is gaining momentum, driven by the need for greater efficiency, and cost reductions. However, the rate and success of adoption vary across regions, companies, and sectors, say experts.

 Charmaine Fernz

The use of data analytics, robotic process automation, AI-driven analytics, and IoT are on the rise for the logistics industry globally. It is evident from the recent statistics that in 2023, expenditure on digital transformation was projected to reach US\$2.15 trillion. By 2027, global digital transformation spending is forecast to reach US\$3.9 trillion. The new norm for most businesses is no different in utilising technologies for digital transformation that render organi-

sations agile in responding to changing markets and enhancing innovation, thereby making them more resilient.

“Digital technology is transforming the cargo industry by enhancing supply chain transparency and visibility. With the integration of IoT, AI, blockchain, real-time tracking, predictive insights, securing tamper-proof transactions have become the norm. As per Gartner study, 80 per cent of enterprises may have already implemented some form of digital technology to augment the visibility of their

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***By 2027, global digital transformation spending is forecast to total as much as US\$3.9 trillion***

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supply chain. Besides addressing operational inefficiencies and fostering better collaboration among stakeholders, digital technologies also en-

able organisations to reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction, and strengthen the overall cargo ecosystem,” Rahul Rai, CEO, Middle East & Africa Region, ECU Worldwide, said.

## **ADOPTION OF DIGITAL TECH**

Digital technology is steadily gaining momentum, but the rate and success of adoption vary across regions, companies, and sectors. Suneet Gupta, VP and Global Head of Business, Kale Logistics sharing a tried and tested method said, “Our ACS is



**Rahul Rai**  
CEO, Middle East & Africa Region  
ECU Worldwide



**Suneet Gupta**  
VP and Global Head of Business  
Kale Logistics



**Edvinas Demenius**  
CEO  
SmartLynx Airlines



**Nari Katgara**  
Director  
Jeena Global Private Limited

“80% of firms may have implemented digital tech to augment the visibility of their supply chain.”

an advanced cloud-based platform that links all stakeholders in the logistics value chain. This approach boosts the efficiency of airport cargo operations, transforming how cargo is managed. We are also pioneering digital corridors between airports and intermodal corridors between airports and ports, enhancing connectivity and operational efficiency.”

“Digital technologies are transforming how we man-

“We are pioneering digital corridors between airports and intermodal corridors between airports & ports.”

age supply chains and cargo operations. Real-time tracking through IoT sensors and GPS devices are crucial for ensuring sensitive goods are handled properly. Major players in the cargo industry integrate robotics and automated systems into their warehouses to streamline operations and reduce errors. On the roads, drones and autonomous vehicles are reshaping last-mile delivery. As we continue to explore new technologies such as AI, ML, blockchain, and

“Big players in the cargo sector integrate robotics and automated systems into warehouses to streamline ops.”

advanced data analytics, the benefits become even clearer. Adopting these technologies leads to faster processes, fewer errors, improved visibility, cost savings, better customer service and real-time data access,” Edvinas Demenius, CEO, SmartLynx Airlines, asserted.

Supply chain transparency and efficiency are paramount, for compliance and fostering trust and ethical practices. “At Jeena and Company, one such initiative is our J5 platform, representing the 5<sup>th</sup> generation, built on a new technology architecture and seamlessly integrates AI-powered Customs House Agent software. This integration automates the digitisation, signing, and uploading of PDF documents to external portals, while real-time tracking within our ERP system has enabled us to reduce lead times from 30 minutes to three minutes,” Nari Katgara, Director, Jeena Global Pvt Ltd said.

#### BEST TECH OPTION

Gupta said in the coming decade, the logistics industry will be shaped by AI, IoT, and blockchain. AI’s predictive capabilities will enable the anticipation of disruptions, optimise cargo placement, and drive decision-making. AI-powered document pro-

“Real-time tracking within our ERP system has enabled us to reduce lead times from 30 minutes to three minutes.”

cessing is revolutionising tasks such as paperwork and customs clearance, thus reducing processing times. Blockchain ensures secure, transparent data sharing across the supply chain, reducing fraud, and combating illegal trade.

#### PROFITABLE COLLABORATION

Demenius felt, “SCM provides an overview of the entire supply chain, ensuring that all parties access consistent information thus minimising errors. These platforms connect key air cargo stakeholders facilitating seamless data exchange and automatic updates on shipment schedules, customs clearance statuses, and delays. This ensures all parties involved are well-informed and can respond promptly to any changes.” Katgara said strong partnerships are key to seizing opportunities in a fast-paced industry.

#### FACT FILE

- Digital technology is changing cargo industry by enhancing supply chain transparency and visibility.
- Real-time tracking through IoT and GPS are ensuring sensitive goods are handled properly.



# Cozmo Logistics officially launches in Dubai

Logistics and supply chain leaders gathered at launch of Cozmo Logistics, which will be a B2B and B2C platform. Cozmo Travel, its sister concern, is committed to delivering efficient and innovative solutions. The company is one of the important leaders in the industry with as many as 50 branches in the Middle East and India.





# Balancing act: Airlines maximising efficiency & profitability

Technological advancements and research have led to the development of various methods and strategies to make usage of air cargo space more effective, say **Mohamed Hassan**, Senior Vice President, Airport Services & Cargo, flydubai, and **Leonard Rodrigues**, Director, Revenue Management & Network, Etihad Cargo.

**Charmaine Fernz**

The aviation industry has long balanced its business between cargo and passenger services to maximise efficiency and profitability. Managing this balance involves planning and strategies that cater to both revenue streams, while considering each other's operational needs. In the ensuing story, we explore how airlines best balance the scales between passengers and cargo, while remaining profitable.

## DYNAMIC SHIFT

Several factors come into play when balancing cargo and passenger services such as optimising fleet use, managing routes, and adapting to market conditions. The ability to dynamically shift between the two revenue streams is critical, especially influenced by factors such as global trade, fuel prices, and unexpected disruptions such as Covid-19.



**Mohamed Hassan**  
SVP, Airport Services & Cargo  
flydubai



**Leonard Rodrigues**  
Director, Revenue Management &  
Network Planning, Etihad Cargo

**“ We focus on optimising capacity within our 88 Boeing 737s and also look at other opportunities.”**

“We have integrated our cargo services into our passenger flights, which has enabled us to maximise the

**“ At Abu Dhabi airport, our dual-use approach for pharma and cargo hub allows us to ensure reliable and timely cargo.”**

use of our passenger aircraft for cargo operations. This dual utilisation approach has helped flydubai Cargo

manage the balance between cargo and passenger services. We continue to focus on optimising cargo capacity within our fleet of 88 Boeing 737 aircraft and look at other opportunities to strengthen our cargo capabilities in the future,” Mohamed Hassan, SVP, Airport Services & Cargo, flydubai, said. “We have strengthened our partnerships with ground handlers, interline partners and service providers to ensure the secure and efficient transportation of cargo at every point during its journey. Because of our interline agreements with other airlines and partnership with Emirates SkyCargo, flydubai Cargo serves 300 destinations, enabling the transportation of goods globally.”

“We operate as a combination carrier, offering belly hold capacity on passenger flights and dedicated freighter services. We prioritise customer needs, driving





us to invest in our physical infrastructure and fleet to improve our cargo-handling capabilities. Our current fleet includes five Boeing 777 freighters provide dedicated cargo capacity. We also use the belly capacity of passenger aircraft to remain adaptable to changing market

## **Streamlined processes handle loose cargo swiftly, reducing the time required for loading and unloading**

demands. At Zayed International Airport, our dual-use approach for the pharma and cargo hub allows us to ensure reliable and timely cargo services, while maintaining operational efficiency,” Leonard Rodrigues, Director, Revenue Management & Network Planning, Etihad Cargo, said, while sharing his perspective.

### **MAXIMISING EFFICIENCY**

Optimising cargo space is critical in aviation, shipping, or logistics, where maximising efficiency can translate to cost savings and increased revenue. Research and technological advancements have led to the development of various methods and strategies to make cargo space use more effective. By implementing strategies, companies can optimise their cargo space, reduce operational costs, and maximise revenue, while ensuring safety and efficiency.

To ensure efficient TAT, streamlined processes are in place to handle loose cargo swiftly and securely, reducing the time required for loading and unloading. At Dubai Airports, our cargo facilities have enabled flydubai Cargo to maintain a high level of efficiency with a minimum of a 60-minute transit period for our cargo and passenger operations. “Our close collaboration with our stakeholders



and partners is also combined with real-time tracking of shipments and scheduling technologies to manage the movement of cargo efficiently, ensuring that our passenger flights depart and arrive on time, especially during peak periods,” Hassan added.

Elaborating on Etihad’s strategy, Rodrigues shared, “Firstly, we monitor the no-show rate per destination and implement overbooking to offset any potential loss. When possible, we pre-carry freight to ensure all available space is fully utilised. In addition, we develop strategic partnerships with other airlines, particularly on routes to the USA via the European gateways, to enhance our capacity utilisation. The use of our RFS network is a critical element, allowing us to feed cargo into bellies with strong passenger numbers but traditionally low cargo demand. Coordination with our operations team is also vital, as they play a key role in physically optimising the units. Collaboration among various stakeholders within Etihad Cargo—such as Revenue Management, Pricing, Network Planning, and the Handling Team—

is crucial for the success of this strategy.”

### **TECH ADVANTAGE**

“flydubai Cargo uses several digital solutions to optimise cargo capabilities. We have invested in advanced technology and the use of AI algorithms that consider passenger load, baggage, types of cargo, and routes. We have recently renewed a pact with SkyChain to streamline every aspect of our operations from booking to delivery and optimise our load planning. In addition, with our renewed and expanded partnership with Accelya, we have enhanced its digital distribution capabilities and connectivity to a wide range of third parties. This year, we continue to explore opportunities to enhance our cargo capabilities by integrating our cargo capacity with third party systems,” Hassan said.

Etihad Cargo’s online booking portal has been upgraded to showcase specialised cargo options and advanced self-service capabilities. This has led to increased online engagement, particularly in key markets such as India, China, and Thailand. The personalised dashboards,

dynamic pricing, and enhanced look-to-book features have streamlined the booking process, empowering customers to manage their cargo needs with greater ease and precision. The Sales Cockpit and Instant Offer Rate tools have simplified the booking process, providing us with insights into our partners’ requirements enabling quicker decision-making.

“The introduction of services for perishables under the FreshForward product line highlights our commitment to delivering tailored solutions that meet the specific needs of different industries,” Rodrigues explained.

### **FACT FILE**

- Flydubai has recently renewed a pact with SkyChain to streamline every aspect of their operations from booking to delivery and optimise our load planning.
- Etihad Cargo’s online booking portal has been upgraded to showcase specialised cargo options and other capabilities.

# Logistics, global supply chain leaders converge on Dubai

Logistics and supply chain leaders met in Dubai to discuss the industry trends, the way forward and adoption of advanced technology, which affects the industry. This year's focus was on disruptions, technological advancements and sustainability initiatives, which are reshaping supply chain worldwide.





# TradeTech Accelerator to aid projects to improve logistics

Jointly with World Economic Forum and Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development, United Arab Emirates launched TradeTech Accelerator initiative to envision efficient, robust and accessible global trading system, says His Excellency Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, UAE.

CT Bureau

His Excellency Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, has officially launched a TradeTech Accelerator, an innovative incubator designed to support startups developing advanced technology solutions for use in the trade sector. Forming one of the key pillars of the TradeTech Initiative, which was launched by the UAE in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED), the Accelerator will help nurture enterprises and projects that will contribute to modernise and improve logistics, customs procedures, trade finance and cross-border payments.

His Excellency Dr Thani launched the Accelerator during WEF's Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils



H.E. Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi  
Minister of State for Foreign Trade  
United Arab Emirates

2024 last month in Dubai. The event gathered more than 500 representatives of the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society from 80 countries to shape a resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. He also announced that Plug n Play, a globally renowned innovation platform with extensive experience in nurturing startups, will be the Accelerator's official partner, providing mentorship, col-



laboration opportunities, and guidance to the participating companies.

During his remarks, His Excellency Dr Thani also called for applications to the Accelerator, which is now open to submissions from companies developing solutions that utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is the focus of the second year of the TradeTech Initiative. It is hoped the first

cohort will graduate from the Accelerator in March 2025.

"The TradeTech Initiative underlines the UAE's leadership on global trade issues. By driving innovation and promoting the integration of advanced technologies, including AI, into supply chains, we can envision a more efficient, more robust and more accessible global trading system," His Excellency said.



"The initiative is an essential part of these efforts, supporting the development of the ideas and enterprises for enhancing processes right the way along the value chain, from securing trade finance to customs clearance documentation. The tool will provide the support and guidelines to develop the best TradeTech solutions and connect them with key players in the logistics and trade sectors to ensure they are viable and scalable. This step will begin to turn promising projects into real-world solutions. This step will begin to turn promising projects into real-world solutions," His Excellency said.

# Alsi Global enhances quality logistics solutions across globe

Alsi Global, a leading name in logistics since its inception in 2008 in the Sultanate of Oman, proudly marks 16 years of success in the industry. Over the past decade and a half, we have steadily grown into a trusted logistics provider with a team of 160 employees and a network across 16 locations in the GCC.

CT Bureau

Known as a global logistics and trade hub, Dubai's central location further strengthens Alsi Global's operational capabilities, allowing us to seamlessly connect with overseas partners, agents, and clients, enhancing our ability to provide efficient, high-quality logistics solutions across the globe.

The inauguration was attended by guests from across the logistics and transportation sectors, including representatives from ocean carriers, airlines, and industry leaders. The event underscored the diverse range of services on the board, from freight forwarding to warehousing and supply chain management, all tailored to meet the evolving demands of our customers in today's dynamic market.

"Our journey has been fuelled by the continuous support of our customers, stakeholders, government bodies,

and partners, who were instrumental in our evolution. In celebration of this remarkable milestone, Alsi Global is excited to announce the

**“The office is set to play a role in our strategy to strengthen our presence across the GCC and beyond.”**

**“We are eager to continue working alongside valued partners, agents, and forge new partnerships.”**

**“We invite all partners and clients to join us in this new growth and explore new opportunities.”**

opening of our newest office in Dubai, UAE recently. Strategically located in Port Saeed Area, near the Deira City Center, the office offers access to the bustling trade and logistics corridors of Dubai,” Salim Al Badi, Founder and Chairman, Alsi Global.

“With the Dubai expansion, Alsi Global reaffirms its commitment to delivering innovative, reliable, and logistics solutions. The new office is set to play a pivotal role in our strategy to strengthen our presence across the GCC and beyond, serving as a bridge between the region and our global partners,” he added.

“As we look to the future, we are eager to continue working alongside our valued partners, agents, and clients,

forging new relationships, and expanding our capabilities to meet the growing needs of the global logistics industry,” Marc Prasad, RVP, said.

“We invite all our partners to join us in this new chapter of growth and to explore new opportunities together as we build on the success of the last 16 years,” VijayanPerumal, Director, Airfreight, said.



**Salim Al Badi**  
Founder and Chairman  
Alsi Global



**Marc Prasad**  
Regional Vice President  
Alsi Global



**Vijayan Perumal**  
Airfreight Director  
Alsi Global



## FACT FILE

- The event underscored a range of services on the board, from forwarding to warehousing and supply chain management, tailored to meet demands of our customers.

# Alsi Global's **new office** to meet high logistics demand

Celebrating as many as 16 years in the United Arab Emirates, Alsi Global opened a new office in Deira, which reflects a growing demand for seamless logistics solutions in this key business hub. The company specialises in various logistics and supply chain solutions from air cargo to road freight.





# ‘10,000 more aircraft to operate in aviation industry by 2034’

As global air traffic demand exceeds pre-pandemic levels in 2024, airlines are turning their attention to fleet expansion. Despite optimistic projections, the airlines face challenges such as OEM struggle in order to ramp up the production of new aircraft, according to a report conducted by **Alton Aviation Consultancy**.

The global aviation advisory firm released its independent 2024-2034 Commercial Aircraft Fleet Forecast, offering detailed insight into the current market conditions, alongside a 10-year forecast of air traffic demand and the active fleet. The consultancy’s projections indicate the fleet should increase from 31,000 aircraft in operation today to 41,100 by 2034, marking an annual growth rate of 2.8 per cent.

“While dynamics are different in each region, the bounce back of international air travel has seen the airlines

the aircraft market by the year 2034, rising from 60 per cent today,” he added.

Despite optimistic projections, the airlines face challenges such as OEM struggle in order to ramp up the production of new aircraft. The current aircraft shortage coupled with ongoing supply chain uncertainties and new engine technology challenges have prompted the airlines to retain older aircraft to meet near-term capacity requirements. Alan Lim, report Co-author and Director, in Alton’s Singapore office, said, “We are seeing substantial order backlogs and in some cases they stretch up to 2030 and beyond. The airlines have responded to the shortage of new aircraft by keeping the older aircraft



in operation for longer periods and slowing down retirements.” While this particular solution is anticipated over the next some years, the present

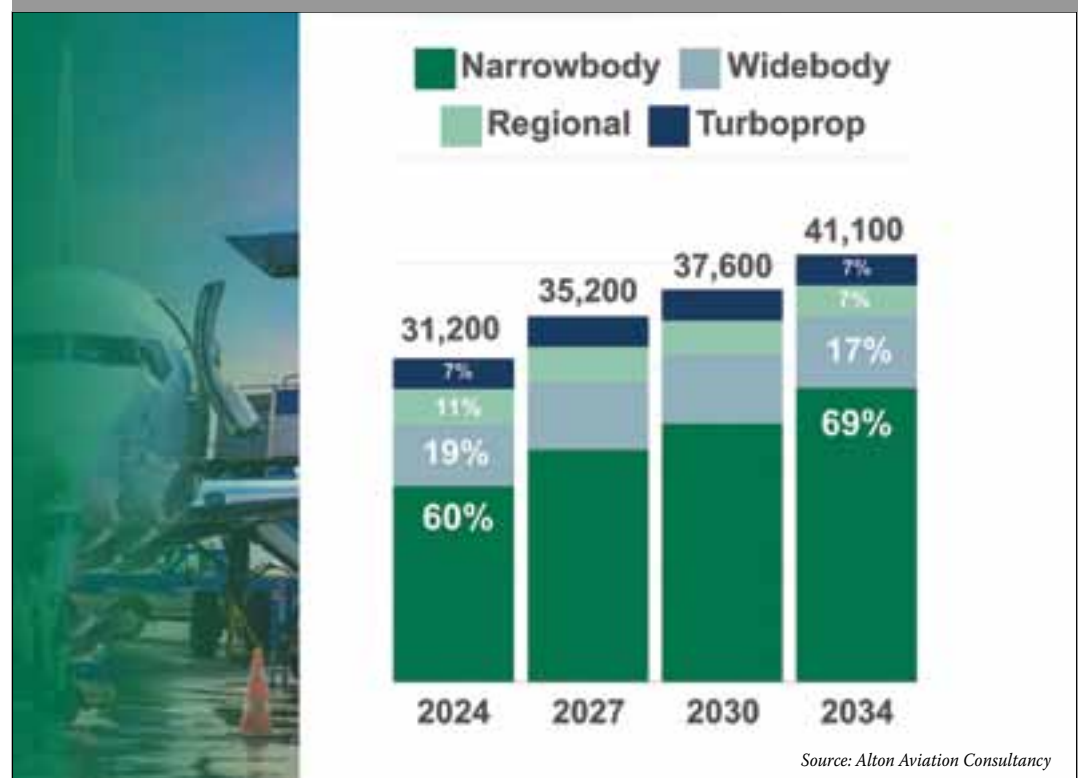
trend is likely to make a sudden volte-face in the medium-term when the production delays are resolved, according to the Alton Aviation Consultancy.

## The aircraft shortage coupled with supply chain uncertainties have prompted airlines to retain old aircraft

shift their focus from recovery to expansion. We expect to see international passenger air traffic demand to increase by 4 per cent annually over the next decade, with Asia-Pacific region leading the new growth,” Adam Guthorn, report Co-author and Managing Director, in Alton’s New York office, said.

“Across all the regions, we are witnessing strong demand for Airbus A320neo and Boeing 737 MAX family aircraft, and we anticipate this trend to continue over the next 10 years. Narrowbody aircraft will account for two-thirds of

FLEET GROWTH 2024 TO 2034 BY AIRCRAFT TYPE







**Adam Guthorn**  
 Managing Director  
 Alton Aviation Consultancy  
 New York, IATA



**Alan Lim**  
 Director  
 Alton Aviation Consultancy  
 Singapore



“Bounce back of international air travel has seen the airlines shift their focus from recovery to expansion.”

“There is strong demand for Airbus A320neo and Boeing 737 MAX family aircraft.”

“Any changes to the macroeconomic outlook or the geopolitical environment have the potential to make a paradigm shift in the airline industry’s anticipated rate of growth. In order to navigate these challenges or issues, the airlines would have to be nimble and forward-looking, while considering a range of different eventualities. Being focused on the difficult road ahead to carry out the execution of the long-term strategies, while adapting to fast-changing industry conditions,

will be critical to the success,” according to the report, which was conducted by the international aviation advisory company.

**FACT FILE**

- The airlines responded to the shortage of new aircraft by keeping older aircraft in operation for longer periods and slowing down retirement.



# Now, global air cargo industry depends on digital technology

Digitalisation in air cargo has become an important strategy in today's industry to conduct efficiency, while saving time, says Nari Katgara, Director, Jeena Global Private Limited. He shared its importance and the long-term benefits of carrying forward digitalisation.

 Charmaine Fernz

## How can digital technology improve supply chain for cargo firms?

In today's dynamic and interconnected global market, the integration of digital technology has evolved from a competitive advantage to an absolute necessity. Supply chain transparency and efficiency are paramount, not only for compliance but for fostering trust and ethical practices. At Jeena and Company, we recognise the critical importance of these advancements, which is why we are proactively implementing cutting-edge solutions.

One such initiative is our J5 platform, representing the 5th generation, which is built on a new technology architecture and seamlessly integrates AI-powered customs house agent (CHA) software. This integration automates the digitisation, signing, and uploading of PDF documents to external portals, while real-time tracking within our ERP system has enabled us to reduce lead times from 30 minutes to a mere three minutes. Such advancements not only streamline our operations but also significantly enhance our relationships with clients and partners, positioning the firm at the forefront of the industry.

## Which digital technologies are most relevant to the companies?

All innovations are important, each serving a purpose of its own. But when considering cargo companies, I believe the most relevant is AI. It excels



**Nari Katgara**  
Director  
Jeena Global Private Limited

**“ Today, there is almost no logistical issue that cannot be addressed by technological innovations.”**

ain predictive analytics, automation, and decision-making, offering significant advantages in optimising operations, reducing costs, and enhancing service reliability. Its ability to analyse vast data sets, automate complex tasks, and provide real-time insights makes it superior to other technologies such as IoT or blockchain, which may have limitations in scalability and integration. AI aligns directly with long-term strategic goals by driving efficiency and enabling rapid adaptation to market changes.

## What are the challenges in cargo operations that digital technologies can address?

Remarkably, in today's time there is almost no logistical issue that cannot be

addressed by innovations. Current challenges in cargo logistics, such as managing complex operations, reducing delays, and enhancing supply chain visibility, can be addressed by digital technologies. Innovations such as route optimisation, digital tracking systems, and data analytics streamline operations by improving decision-making and optimising performance.

However, despite the availability of these tech solutions, adoption remains slow due to the time-consuming nature of implementation and the significant investment required. For companies that embrace these advancements, the rewards include reduced costs, improved efficiency, and enhanced customer satisfaction. Integrating these technologies helps companies align with strategic goals and stay competitive in an evolving market.

## How can digital technology improve collaboration

**between stakeholders in the cargo ecosystem (e.g., airlines, freight forwarders, customs authorities)?**

Strong partnerships are key to navigating challenges and seizing opportunities in a fast-paced industry. Digital technology enhances collaboration in the cargo ecosystem primarily by enabling real-time data sharing and communication. For example, cloud-based platforms allow stakeholders like airlines, freight forwarders, and customs authorities to access and update shipment information instantly, ensuring everyone is aligned. This real-time exchange is crucial because it reduces delays, minimizes errors, and creates a more synchronized and efficient supply chain. Effective collaboration not only improves operational efficiency but also strengthens relationships between stakeholders, leading to better service delivery and a more resilient cargo network. 🚚



## Etihad Cargo marks 20-yr of ops in India

Etihad Cargo celebrate milestone 20 years of operations, expanding potentially across the country offering belly hold capacity via nonstop services between Abu Dhabi and 12 Indian cities. "As Etihad Cargo celebrates two decades of successful operations in India, the carrier's commit-



ment to its customers remains strong. Etihad Cargo's investment in its network, product range, infrastructure, and digitalisation efforts continue to ensure the carrier provides efficient, reliable air cargo solutions that meet the evolving needs of customers in India and beyond," Stanislas Brun, Vice President, Etihad Cargo, said.

## BIA expands cargo operations, hosts FedEx

Bahrain International Airport (BIA) is improvising its cargo operations as part of a strategy to broaden its global presence and solidify its position as a key aviation and logistics hub in the Gulf region. With plans to expand its network to 100 cities within the next four to five years, the airport is making investments in infra to support this cargo growth. The



first phase, covering 12,500 m<sup>2</sup>, is already operational and hosts FedEx. "We are aligned as stakeholders than ever before. Our national air connectivity plan aims to reach 100 cities, and this plan is being executed over four to five years," Mohamed Yousif Al Bin-falah, CEO, BAC, said

## Qatar Airways announces plans to acquire 25% stake in Virgin Australia



Qatar Airways has announced plans to acquire a 25 per cent stake in Virgin Australia, signaling a partnership between the two airlines. As part of the

deal, Virgin Australia will begin offering direct flights to Doha, strengthening its global presence. For Qatar Airways, this collaboration provides enhanced

access to the Australian market, allowing it to expand its network. Both airlines aim to capitalise on the surge in global travel demand, offering passengers more connectivity and options across continents. "The alignment of our two airlines is significant, the relationships are deep. The investment demonstrates our alignment with Virgin Australia and our ambition to deliver the best possible service to Australian passengers," Badr Al-Meer, Chief Executive, Qatar Airways Group, said. The partnership is set to boost tourism and business ties between the Middle East and Australia, he added.

## Etihad Cargo, SF Airlines: Project to support Abu Dhabi's vision to become global hub

Etihad Cargo and SF Airlines have announced a commitment to a groundbreaking project that will create a JV landmark. This initiative represents a significant milestone in the 40-year history of diplomatic relations between the UAE and China. "As the national carrier of the UAE, Etihad Airways is committed to supporting Abu Dhabi's vision of becoming a global logistics and express hub. This joint venture with SF Airlines is a critical step in realising that vision. By aligning our strengths, Etihad Airways and SF Airlines are enhancing operations and contributing to the economic growth and diversification of



Abu Dhabi, Ezhou and Shenzhen. This partnership will be pivotal in positioning the UAE as a key player in global

logistics, benefiting both our nations and the broader market," Antonoaldo Neves, CEO, Etihad Airways, said.

## AJEX & Widect partner to boost MENA region

AJEX Logistics Services, a leading expert in express distribution and shipping solutions, has partnered with Widect, a prominent logistics brand and 100 per cent subsidiary of Turkish Airlines, a player in the e-commerce sector. This agreement aims to enhance shipping solutions along the Turkiye (formerly Turkey) to the Middle East route and improve last-



mile delivery for the rapidly growing e-commerce market across the MENA region. Through this collaboration, AJEX customers will benefit

from daily flights between Istanbul and Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam, improving the speed of services, including last-mile deliveries.

## Maersk opens new air freight gateway in Miami to boost global



Danish shipping giant, Maersk has inaugurated a 90,000 feet air freight gateway in Miami. This new facility is designed to enhance logistics linkage between the Americas and key cities in Europe and Asia. The gateway will serve as a hub for shipments, aimed at facilitating trade with Latin America. “We seek to strengthen our presence in select cities of North American and Asian markets. This includes seamless truck connectivity through our North American station network thereby ensuring efficient and reliable integrated logistics solutions,” Sean Feeney, Director, WHSmith Supply Chain, said, in a press release.

## Swiss WorldCargo partners with Globe Air Cargo Bulgaria

The agreement between Swiss WorldCargo, which specialises in transporting high-value, care-intensive, and temperature-sensitive cargo, and Globe Air Cargo Bulgaria dates 2008. After a six-year hiatus, the two firms re-established their partnership earlier this year. “Our joint contract was never terminated during all this time. It was clear from our initial face-to-face tender meeting 16 years ago that our two firms share a strong common interest in providing exceptional customer service through long-term stability and expertise,” Tania Mlechenkova, MD, Globe Air Cargo Bulgaria, said.



## WHSmith Partners with GXO to streamline distribution operations

UK-based WHSmith has announced a restructuring of its distribution operations, transferring its three in-house centres in Swindon, Birmingham, and Dunstable to GXO Logistics. This move will enable GXO to manage the end-to-end supply chain for WHSmith’s 1,100 retail locations across the UK, including both travel and high street outlets. WHSmith aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its supply chain through this partnership, supporting the performance of its UK Travel and High Street businesses. The collaboration marks a step in WHSmith’s commitment to optimising its operations in an evolving retail landscape, a release stated.



## GlobalX joins Airblox to up capacity between Chicago, San Juan



Global Crossing Airlines (GlobalX) will launch round-trip cargo flights between Chicago and San Juan thrice a week, marking the start of a new partnership with digital air cargo exchange, Airblox. Capacity for this service will be available through the Airblox platform. The flights will operate using an Airbus A321F, which offers a capacity of 25 tonnes in each direction, starting October 10. “We will offer this route from Chicago to San Juan through the Airblox platform. The A321F delivers 14 per cent more capacity than Boeing 757-200, Ryan Goepel, President and CFO, GlobalX, said.

## IAG Cargo resumes ops from London to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur

IAG Cargo is set to enhance the Asia-Pacific cargo market from London with the resumption of flights to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur after a four-year hiatus. Starting October 28, three cargo flights per week will take off from London Gatwick to Bangkok using a Boeing 777, as well as daily flights from London Heathrow to Kuala Lumpur on a Boeing 787.

Also, IAG Cargo will operate 10 weekly flights to Tokyo Haneda from London Heathrow, and flights to Tokyo Narita will resume from Madrid, Spain. “We are pleased to welcome back Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur to our schedule and resume flights to Tokyo from Madrid. These destinations



represent crucial connections for cargo transport and enable our customers in the Asia-Pacific region to tap into our international network via our hubs in London, Madrid, Dublin and Barcelona,” Camilo Garcia Cervera, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, said.

## Sin-Kung Logistics buys Prima Air

Sin-Kung Logistics Bhd has signed a pact to acquire cent per cent equity interest in aircraft leasing firm Prima Air Sdn Bhd for RM20.7 million in cash. The deal was inked with Prima Air's owners, Tan Sri Halim Mohammad and



Puan Sri Mazmin Noordin. In a filing with Bursa Malaysia, Sin-Kung Logistics stated the acquisition represents an opportunity to broaden its service offerings. The group aims to expand its air freight services, targeting airlines—local and global forwarders

## 1Neo-Connect solution launched



CHAMP Cargosystems has launched its latest innovation, 1Neo-Connect, aimed at simplifying the adoption of IATA's ONE Record standard for the cargo industry. ONE Record is a data-sharing protocol to modernise the way air cargo data is exchanged, replacing outdated formats such as Cargo IMP and XML. "By embracing ONE Record and solutions such as 1Neo-Connect, the sector can enjoy benefits of harmonised information exchange and unlock visibility across the supply chain," Chris McDermott, CEO, CHAMP, said.

## To expand capacity, Singapore all set for another airport logistics park by 2030

Singapore is set to build a second Airport Logistics Park by 2030, aimed at expanding capacity and reinforcing Changi Airport's position as a regional air cargo hub. As manufacturers seek new production locations, trade routes are shifting, resulting in higher cargo volumes passing through Singapore. The new park will provide more capacity, attracting more logistics firms to establish regional distribution centres in Singapore. This development aligns with Singapore's efforts to adapt to evolving logistics needs. "The addition



of the second logistics park will increase the vibrancy of Changi air cargo hub ecosystem and help to

maintain Singapore's relevance as a node in the global supply chains," Gan, Deputy Prime Minister, said.

## Expanding its network, DHL Express launches direct flights to Hong Kong, Jakarta

DHL Express has expanded its aviation network with a new direct flight route connecting Hong Kong to Jakarta. The B737-800 freighter will operate on this route four times a week, arriving in Jakarta at 8:00 am local time. This dedicated service promises to boost the speed and reliability of deliveries across Asia-Pacific region, benefiting businesses and individuals in Indonesia with faster and efficient shipping options. "Adding a new direct flight from Hong Kong to Indonesia rep-



resents a step in enhancing our aviation network. This strategy strengthens our linkage in APAC

region," Andy Chiang, Senior VP and MD, DHL Express Hong Kong and Macau, said.

## IATA WSS collaborates with British Airways, Microsoft for carbon emission calculations

At the IATA World Sustainability Symposium (WSS) in Miami, IATA announced new collaborations with British Airways and Microsoft to enhance the accuracy of carbon emission calculations for cargo. British Airways will contribute flight-level fuel burn data from its 700 daily flights to IATA's CO<sub>2</sub> Connect tool. Microsoft will provide technological support to refine the platform. "At British Airways, transparency and consistency are essential to our sustainability efforts. By sharing our flight-level



fuel burn data with IATA CO<sub>2</sub> Connect, we are enhancing the accuracy of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions calculations and

ensuring access to reliable information," Carrie Harris, Director, Sustainability, British Airways, said.

# Movements

## EMIRATES AIRLINE

### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



**Khalid Al Zarooni** has been appointed VP, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With an experience of 18 years at Emirates Airlines, he will manage six different teams such as Sales, Reservations, Airport, Cargo and Engineering.

## EMIRATES AIRLINE

### Dharan & KSA Eastern



**Fahad Al Hassawi** has been appointed as the District Manager, Dharan and Eastern Province of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Emirates. He has been working with Emirates for more than 10 years and formerly held various leadership roles.

## EMIRATES AIRLINE

### Kuwait & Iraq



**Khalfan Al Salami** is appointed as Manager, Kuwait and Iraq, Emirates. With nine years of experience in Emirates. In his new role, Salami will lead the regional operations of Kuwait and Iraq to strengthen the business and expansion for the airline.

## EMIRATES AIRLINE

### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



**Khalid Al Zarooni** has been promoted as Vice President, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Emirates Airlines. He also served as the Manager of Kuwait and Iraq. Zarooni and has more than 18 years of experience at Emirates Airlines.

## EMIRATES AIRLINE

### Morocco



**Abdulla Adnan** has joined as the Country Manager, Morocco, Emirates. He was formerly the manager of Tanzania. Experienced in aviation and digital transformation, Adnan steered the airlines toward growth and profitability.

## DHL

### Singapore



**Wassim Mnif** has been appointed as COO, Asia-Pacific, DHL Supply Chain. Having worked as Head of Operations Excellence, at DSC Japan, and Korea Cluster, Mnif has contributed to the standardisation agenda of the cluster.

## SWISSPORT

### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



**Hamad Alhemed** has joined as new CEO, KSA, Swissport. With 17 years of experience in Swissport, he was a part of shaping the firm's development and building partnerships in aviation. His expertise will expand the firm's presence in KSA.

## NISHA CARGO

### UAE



**Hitesh Dhingra** has joined as Head, Commercials, Nisha Cargo. In his new role, he will oversee airline products (GSAs) in UAE. Having worked in the air cargo division for 20 years, he held various positions from operations to marketing.

## LUFTHANSA

### Germany



**Oliver von Götze** has taken over as Head, Global Fulfillment Management, Lufthansa Cargo in Germany. With 13 years of experience in aviation sector, he was responsible for Lufthansa's global warehouse handling and management.

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Advertising: [rajith@ddppi.com](mailto:rajith@ddppi.com), +971 52 920 8584 | [crisna@ddppi.com](mailto:crisna@ddppi.com), +971 55 470 4200






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