



The weekly newspaper for air cargo professionals

ACW is sponsored by

ECS GROUP

ECS@GROUP



ESSA

**DISRUPT
TRADITION**



The weekly newspaper for air cargo professionals



SCAN HERE TO RECEIVE OUR NEWS

No. 1,351 20 October 2025

Follow Us:

Did You Know?

For many years, criminal gangs have been smuggling drugs hidden in shipments of flowers, using the legitimate and high-volume international ...



Growth and innovation ...

GLOBAL trade is under pressure. Airfreight demand is recovering unevenly. Digitalisation is accelerating, but with growing gaps between ...



60 Seconds With ...

Benny Smets is Chief Executive Officer of Ninatrans, a family-owned company specialising in time-critical road transport for customers ...



For all the advances in supply chain software, most logistics operations still lack a clear, real-time view of what is happening on the ground. Shipments can be tracked across continents, yet the exact state of a pallet leaving a dock or a consignment in storage often remains unknown until a problem surfaces. This "last visibility gap" is where vision-based artificial intelligence is starting to make its mark.

By using cameras combined with AI models, the technology can monitor loading bays, storage aisles, and yard operations continuously, flagging issues as they arise rather than after the fact. That immediacy is proving valuable in an industry facing rising costs, shrinking delivery windows, and heightened customer expectations. Instead of relying on manual checks or waiting for end-of-shift reports, operators can spot misloads, damaged goods, or bottlenecks in real time and act immediately.

Unlike broader AI tools that focus on forecasting or optimising high-level strategy, vision AI targets the day-to-day physical processes that determine whether goods move smoothly or get delayed. Its strength lies in turning raw visual data into actionable insights without overhauling existing systems, delivering results that can be measured in weeks rather than months.

Efficiency gains

The numbers are striking. In Lumenalta's research, 57.68 percent of adopters reported improved operational efficiency, often through applications as straightforward as automated cycle counting, which eliminates manual audits. Misplacement detection prevents hours of costly search time, while dock optimisation tracks load accuracy and dwell time in real time.

"Picking workflows are streamlined by monitoring equipment utilisation and optimising pathing," says Donovan Crewe, senior software architect and tech lead at Lumenalta. "Quality control improves with automated damage detection, packaging verification, and chain-of-custody validation."

The result is less wasted labour, fewer reworks, and supervisors armed with real-time, data-backed insights that sharpen both speed and accuracy. One vehicle logistics



firm saved over US\$600,000 a year simply by documenting vehicle condition at transfer points, reducing successful damage claims by 40 percent. While not every project delivers six-figure savings, Crewe notes that 48.19 percent of adopters reported meaningful cost reductions, with many seeing payback "in weeks rather than the months typical of DIY builds".

Early adopters aren't ripping out existing systems. Instead, they run targeted readiness assessments to pinpoint operational bottlenecks and integrate vision AI with existing WMS, TMS, or ERP platforms. Most take what Crewe calls a "crawl-walk-run model": narrow pilot, proven ROI, then expansion and standardisation.

Barriers to adoption

If there's a sticking point, it's skills. Lumenalta's survey found an 87 percent skill gap in applying AI effectively within logistics. "Vendors are stepping in not just as tech providers but as partners in capability building," he says. Pre-packaged solutions, low-code platforms, and embedded training are all lowering the barrier. Smart companies pair

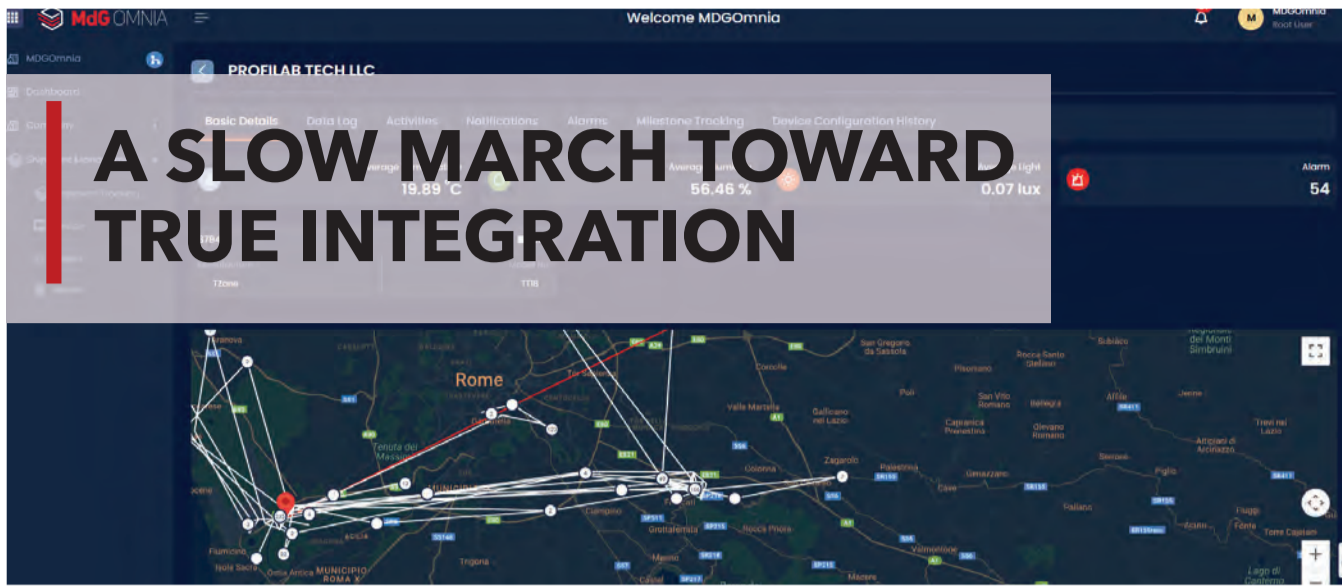
these rollouts with internal champions — often from operations or IT — who bridge the gap between technology and day-to-day use.

Integration is another challenge. While APIs and middleware now allow for event-based triggers and real-time data syncs, some companies still experience delays in acting on insights. "The top performers treat vision AI as part of their operational nervous system, not just a reporting tool," Crewe notes.

Beyond efficiency and damage control, Crewe sees under-discussed uses emerging. Vision AI can track new staff performance, flagging where they hesitate or deviate from best practice without constant managerial oversight. It's also being applied to predictive maintenance — from forklifts to dock doors — and even to auditing sustainability KPIs like waste sorting accuracy.

As with any camera-based system, privacy concerns loom large. Successful companies, Crewe says, are transparent from day one, explaining "not just what the cameras are doing, but why", and framing them as tools for safety, quality, and efficiency rather than surveillance.





BY Edward HARDY

FOR years, the airfreight sector has talked about digitalisation as the cure to its chronic inefficiencies. Electronic airwaybills, automated customs filing, and shipment trackers were hailed as breakthroughs. Yet most of these solutions have lived in siloes, solving one problem at a time without addressing the bigger picture: how thousands of actors in a global supply chain can work from a shared source of truth.

That question is becoming impossible to avoid. With cargo volumes under pressure, regulatory demands increasing, and customers expecting real-time visibility from factory floor to final delivery, the industry faces a critical test. Can it move beyond fragmented tools and embrace connected digital ecosystems—or will it continue to rely on closed systems that stop short of true transparency?

Breaking down the walls of siloed systems

"The change is happening, but it is slow and uneven," says Marco Del Giudice, Managing Director of MdG src socio Unicode. "We see gradual progress in some areas, such as platforms for customs operations or airwaybill management and issuance. But in many others—shipment tracking for example—we still find closed systems."

This reliance on stand-alone platforms leaves stakeholders duplicating work, reconciling inconsistent data, and in some cases competing to control visibility rather than sharing it. Del Giudice

argues the future lies in building middleware layers that connect disparate databases, trackers, and monitoring tools.

"The airfreight industry needs to believe in ecosystems and in sharing data through the entire chain," he says. "Every player should see the same real-time picture of the cargo flow, from individual components to door-to-door operations."

That vision, while clear, requires cultural as much as technical change. Many forwarders and airlines still hesitate to share commercial data with rivals, fearing loss of advantage. But without deeper trust, the digital ceiling remains low.

From dashboards to digital twins

Airports are experimenting with digital twin models—virtual replicas of their cargo flows and infrastructure—to deliver real-time operational dashboards. In theory, such systems can knit together warehouse activity, aircraft handling, customs clearance, and final-mile delivery into a single living map.

"Digital twin systems have already had a big impact in other industries, like packaging development and cloud solutions," Del Giudice explains. "In airfreight they will be implemented more and more, but only if they are linked to shared visibility, predictive tools, and big data."

The promise is striking: a model showing bottlenecks as they form, alerting handlers to delays before they cascade, and even predicting disruptions from weather or geopolitical events. Yet the leap from isolated dashboards to interconnected networks is not simple. It requires standardised data, agreed interfaces, and a willingness to pool information that has historically been guarded closely.

Artificial intelligence

Few topics generate as much buzz in logistics as artificial intelligence. But behind the headlines, its role remains limited. "AI today is mostly a co-pilot," says Del Giudice. "It surfaces better data, generates options, and automates routine tasks. But human approval is still essential."

The bigger challenge, he argues, is organisational. "To embed AI properly, companies will need to rethink their entire structures. It's not just a matter of plugging in software. It requires a redesign of processes, tools, and decision-making."

That doesn't mean the potential is small. A McKinsey study estimates AI could unlock up to US\$1.8 trillion in value across travel, transport, and logistics—about half of it from commercial applications like pricing and customer service. But for airfreight, real adoption may hinge less on algorithms and more on data governance. Without consistent, trusted data flowing across systems, AI cannot deliver much more than smarter reports.

Regulation, security and the trust deficit

Digitalisation is not just about efficiency; increasingly, it is becoming a licence to operate. Regulatory authorities are tightening requirements for data exchange, emissions reporting, and cargo security. Yet their own systems are not always agile.

"Authorities are slowly integrating, and they are trying to keep up with the market," Del Giudice notes. "But cybersecurity is the biggest brake. The more interconnected the systems are, the harder cybersecurity becomes to manage. And on that, there can be no compromises."

This creates a paradox. The industry needs openness to achieve visibility, yet the risks of cyberattacks make many actors retreat behind walled systems. Resolving this tension—through secure standards, shared protocols, and tested defences—may be one of the most urgent tasks for airfreight's digital future.

Beyond efficiency

If the pandemic and recent geopolitical crises proved anything, it is that efficiency alone is not enough. Supply chains built on just-in-time principles buckle when shocks hit. Digital infrastructure, Del Giudice argues, must now deliver resilience as well.

"Resilience is at least as important as efficiency," he says. "We need systems able to predict geopolitical, meteorological, or social events—strikes, blockages, disruptions—and suggest alternative scenarios before the chain is broken."



DRUG SMUGGLING IN FLOWERS

BY Michael SALES

For many years, criminal gangs have been smuggling drugs hidden in shipments of flowers, using the legitimate and high-volume international floral trade as a cover. The huge volumes of flowers being flown and trucked globally make thorough inspections extremely challenging.

Various techniques are favoured by the smugglers, including hidden compartments and cavities, often sealed in plastic bags and concealed beneath or between layers of cut flowers in shipping boxes. In one case, a gang cut the stems of chrysanthemums shorter to create space for cannabis packages at the bottom of the box. Traffickers use crates with false bottoms or create hidden compartments within flower carts to conceal large quantities of drugs. In some instances, narcotics, such as cocaine, are hidden directly among the stems, petals, and roots

of flowers. This has led to concerns about the health risks for people who handle the flowers. Organised criminal gangs have been caught using international logistics supply chains to move drugs and guns by posing as legitimate flower wholesalers.

Major drug-producing countries, such as Colombia, are also leading flower exporters. The high volume of flowers shipped, especially around holidays like Valentine's Day, makes it easier to camouflage drug shipments. At busy ports and airports, authorities primarily focus on pests and other agricultural threats.

In response, customs agencies and police have increased efforts to intercept barbiturate-bearing flower shipments, often with the help of sniffer dogs. However, the scale of the international flower trade makes it an ongoing challenge for authorities. A 2020 drug bust found 5,000 kg of cocaine in a container from Costa Rica. Traffickers have found new ways to transport narcotics, such

as dissolving ketamine in Listerine bottles, shaping cocaine to resemble individual Pringles and packaging them in tubes, hiding MDMA crystals inside live seafood, etc.

Recently, a suspicious pallet of flowers arrived at the Aalsmeer flower auctions, and when customs officers with the police took a closer look, they discovered nearly 100 kilos of cocaine hidden among the shipment of flowers. The global trade in illegal drugs is expanding continuously, while customs, airlines, and handling agents equally fight to prevent it.



T: +44 (0)1737 906107

Advertising: sales@azurainternational.com
 Subscriptions: subs@azurainternational.com
 Press releases: news@azurainternational.com

The ACW Team

Editor:	Edward Hardy
Supplement Editor:	James Graham
News Reporter:	Anastasiya Simsek
Regional Representative (APAC):	Ajinkya Gurav
Regional Representative (North America):	Oscar Sardinas
Associate Editor:	Chris Lewis
Director of Operations:	Kim Smith
International Media Sales Director:	Rosa Bellanca
Senior Publishing And Events Manager:	Chris Richman
International Sales Executive:	Zainab Khalid
Finance Manager:	Rachel Burns
Design & Production Manager:	Alex Brown
Production Supervisor:	Kevin Dennis
Website Consultant:	Tim Brocklehurst
Managing Director:	Steven Polmans

Annual subscription rates: Print issue: £150 • € 180 • US\$195
 (20% will be donated to our NGO sustainability projects)
 Digital issue: Free-of-charge

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publishers. Whilst every care is taken, the publishers cannot be held legally responsible for any errors in articles or advertisements. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by electronic, mechanical, photographic or other means without the prior consent of the publishers. USA: The publishers shall not be liable for losses, claims, damages or expenses arising out of or attributed to the contents of Air Cargo Week, insofar as they are based on information, presentations, reports or data that have been publicly disseminated, furnished or otherwise communicated to Air Cargo Week.
 © Azura International 2024 • ISSN 2040-1671 - Printed by Womersley Midlands plc. The Mailing, Manor Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 5PH

Start your
collection

Ship Now

from London Heathrow to Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru,
Johannesburg, Cape Town, Dubai, Riyadh, Lagos



WESTJET 
CARGO

virgin atlantic 
cargo

ASIA'S EMERGING CARGO ARTERIES



BY Ajinkya GURAV

FROM Vietnam's ascendancy as a cross-border e-commerce hub to the Philippines' emergence as a pharmaceutical logistics gateway, and India's policy-led air cargo expansion, South and Southeast Asia are no longer peripheral players in the global supply chain—they are its fastest-growing arteries. The timing of this transformation is significant.

Against a backdrop of tariff realignments, shifting manufacturing bases, and the reconfiguration of global trade corridors, the region's air cargo sector is becoming a vital enabler of supply chain resilience. The implications extend far beyond logistics; they touch industrial policy, sustainability, and economic strategy.

Realignment in motion

The Asia-Pacific region's share of global airfreight reached 37 percent in 2024, up from 33 percent in 2020, according to IATA. Within that, Southeast Asia recorded the strongest growth, reflecting the region's accelerating diversification away from traditional manufacturing centres in China.

This shift is not purely economic—it is geopolitical. The United States' revised tariff regimes on goods from China, India, and Vietnam have triggered a wide-scale redistribution of manufacturing capacity across Asia. Supply chains, once vertically integrated in China, are now being regionalised across Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, while South Asia, led by India, plays an increasingly critical role in upstream manufacturing and downstream consumption.

As global corporations seek redundancy and resilience, this fragmentation has produced new opportunities for airfreight. With short lead times and limited warehousing capacity, manufacturers are relying more heavily on air transport for time-sensitive and high-value cargo, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and precision components.

The region is entering a phase of multi-nodal growth. It's no longer about one dominant hub, but about an interlinked network of regional gateways—from Manila and Bangkok to Hanoi and Delhi.

The Philippines

Among the most compelling developments is the Philippines' transformation into a pharmaceutical logistics hub. Once primarily an import-dependent market, the country is rapidly building life sciences export capacity. UN Comtrade data shows that pharmaceutical exports rose by 24 percent in 2024, supported by collaboration with Indian and South Korean manufacturers and expansion of temperature-controlled handling at Manila, Cebu, and Clark.

Recent investments—such as AirAsia's partnership with Clark International Airport for pharma logistics and WFS's cold chain upgrades in Manila—are reinforcing the country's infrastructure readiness.

Strategically, the Philippines sits at the crossroads of South and Southeast Asia, offering a direct air bridge between India's pharma clusters and ASEAN's healthcare markets. The launch of Air India's Delhi-Manila service in October 2025 adds a direct air corridor for vaccine and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) exports. Analysts note that this could make the Philippines to the current decade what Singapore was to the early 2000s—a regional distribution hub for time- and temperature-sensitive cargo.

Vietnam and Thailand

The momentum is equally visible in Vietnam and Thailand, which have become anchors of Asia's e-commerce-led export economy. Vietnam's total merchandise exports reached US\$386 billion in 2024, with air freight volumes up 11 percent year-on-year, according to Vietnam Customs. Electronics, fashion, and cross-border e-commerce have driven demand for fast-cycle air logistics, with major players such as DHL Express, FedEx, and Cainiao expanding operations at Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Thailand, by contrast, is evolving through digitalisation and policy-driven trade facilitation. Its Thailand 4.0 initiative has integrated customs digitalisation, bonded warehousing, and multimodal logistics in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)—a development corridor that now supports a 6 percent annual rise in airfreight

throughput. Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport handled 1.5 million tonnes of cargo in 2024, much of it linked to cross-border e-commerce with China and ASEAN.

According to a Thai Ministry of Commerce, E-commerce has become a pillar of Thailand's trade competitiveness. The digital logistics strategy ensures that goods move faster across borders and with lower administrative friction.

These trends are reshaping freight flows. What was once a unidirectional supply line—from East Asia to the West—is increasingly intra-regional, connecting production, assembly, and consumption nodes within Asia itself.

India and Singapore

While Southeast Asia dominates attention for its dynamism, India and Singapore provide the policy and structural backbone that sustains this transformation.

India's National Air Cargo Policy (NACP) and Gati Shakti multimodal infrastructure plan aim to increase air cargo handling capacity to 10 million tonnes per annum by 2030, from 3.8 million tonnes in FY2024 (Ministry of Civil Aviation). This is supported by India's National Logistics Policy, which seeks to reduce logistics costs from 13–14 percent of GDP to global benchmarks of 8–10 percent.

In practice, Indian carriers such as IndiGo and Air India are now extending cross-regional reach with long-haul routes to Europe and Southeast Asia, boosting bellyhold cargo capacity across key corridors. India-ASEAN trade reached US\$130 billion in 2024, driven largely by pharmaceuticals, textiles, and engineering components—all reliant on efficient airfreight.

Singapore, meanwhile, remains the region's policy and innovation hub. Handling more than 2.1 million tonnes of air cargo annually, Changi Airport continues to set benchmarks for digitalisation, sustainability, and multimodal integration. The ongoing expansion of the Changi Airfreight Centre and Airport Logistics Park demonstrates Singapore's dual strategy—balancing efficiency with environmental responsibility.

Singapore is more than a logistics hub; it's a prototype for regional harmonisation. Its customs frameworks, green corridor models, and digital air waybill systems are being replicated across ASEAN economies.

The policy dimension

The recent reconfiguration of US trade tariffs on Asia's emerging economies has had a mixed impact. While certain export categories—particularly electronics and solar components—have faced new barriers, the region has responded by strengthening intra-Asian trade.

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), intra-Asia exports now account for 58 percent of total regional trade, up from 54 percent in 2019. This expansion has reinforced short-haul airfreight demand, particularly for e-commerce and just-in-time manufacturing inputs. IATA projects intra-Asian air cargo demand to grow by 6.8 percent annually through 2030, the highest globally.

National strategies have adjusted accordingly. Indonesia's National Logistics Ecosystem (NLE) programme focuses on port-airport integration; Malaysia's Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) enhances cross-border e-commerce; and Vietnam's Airport Master Plan 2050 allocates significant new capacity for air cargo development. Collectively, these initiatives signal that air logistics has become a core industrial policy tool rather than a support function.

World's
Largest
ULD fleet

unilode®



Simple, Sustainable, Innovative
ULD Management Solutions

Let's fly... Together!



Solutions@Unilode.com



Unilode.com

SHIP TO:



FROM:
AUH



WAYBILL NO. 607 721 85970

FROM:
NBO

WAYBILL NO. 607 721 85970



SHIP TO:



FROM:
JFK

SHIP TO:



WAYBILL NO. 607 721 85970

LIVEANIMALS



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



**WORLD
ACD** TAKE
YOUR DATA
FURTHER



Air cargo market intelligence for informed decision making

WorldACD delivers the air cargo industry's most detailed and complete global database, empowering smarter decisions. Backed by 20 years of experience and a network of 135+ airlines, forwarders, shippers, GSAs, and airports, we provide accurate weekly and monthly insights from primary data sources. Spanning thousands of city and airport pairs in over 150 countries, our data supports strategic planning and helps with making better decisions to increase commercial performance.



Sign up for free at worldacd.com to
stay up to date with our trend reports





CAN DATA STANDARDS BRING ORDER TO SOUTHEAST ASIA'S CARGO SPRAWL?

BY Anastasiya SIMSEK

AS Southeast Asia's air cargo flows grow more complex, fragmented systems—not infrastructure—are fast becoming the region's weak point.

To fix that, Singapore Airlines Cargo is pushing for industry-wide digital cohesion, starting with data. The carrier is among the most vocal proponents of IATA's ONE Record standard, which promises a unified framework for shipment data across airlines, handlers, forwarders, and customs.

"SIA Cargo took a giant leap forward by expanding its partnerships with IBS Software and Cargo Community Network (CCN) on the ONE Record standard," the airline said. "These important efforts have been instrumental in rallying support and forging crucial connections for a global ecosystem."

ONE Record enables all stakeholders to share shipment information through a single, secure data model—an increasingly urgent need as cross-border e-commerce and time-sensitive goods like pharmaceuticals demand real-time coordination across multiple jurisdictions.

SIA's advocacy isn't limited to back-end systems. The airline has also integrated with three major digital booking platforms—cargo.one, WebCargo, and CargoAi—to offer forwarders real-time access to space across the Singapore Airlines Group network.

"Freight forwarders in more than 20 markets can now conveniently book cargo space," the carrier said, with plans to expand platform coverage and services in FY2025/26.



Coast-to-coast coverage. Expert handling.

We lead the movement of movement, connecting products to people worldwide.



Scan the QR to book in a few clicks and access the world's most comprehensive route network.

RECONFIGURING THE INDO-UK AIR CARGO CORRIDOR



BY Ajinkya GURAV

When IndiGo launches its first direct daily service between Mumbai and London Heathrow on 26th October 2025, the flight will represent more than a milestone in the airline's international expansion. It will mark a structural shift in how India and the United Kingdom move high-value trade, at a time when both nations are entering a new phase of economic cooperation under the recently concluded UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

For an audience following the evolution of air cargo policy, the development goes beyond aviation news. IndiGo's expansion into Europe's largest hub airport opens a new logistics artery that ties directly into policy objectives on both sides: reducing supply chain friction, boosting bilateral exports, and creating a more resilient South-North trade network in the post-pandemic, post-Brexit economy.

A corridor of strategic significance

The India-UK air corridor has long been one of the most lucrative routes for both passenger and cargo operators. Prior to 2020, airfreight between the two nations accounted for nearly US\$4 billion annually, according to India's Ministry of Commerce—dominated by pharmaceuticals, precious stones, engineering components, and textiles. The United Kingdom, for its part, exported machinery, industrial equipment, and

medical devices to India.

IndiGo's new long-haul service from Mumbai to Heathrow reintroduces critical bellyhold capacity into this high-value trade ecosystem. Each Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, operated under a damp lease with Norse Atlantic Airways, will add approximately 15–18 tonnes of cargo capacity per flight. The airline's daily frequency could, therefore, inject over 100 tonnes per week of additional lift into a trade lane constrained by limited slots and rising e-commerce volumes.

For India's air logistics network, the route signifies an effort to move from regional connectivity to strategic long-haul relevance. For the UK, it consolidates its post-Brexit economic ties with one of its fastest-growing trading partners in Asia, where India's GDP is projected to grow at 6.5 percent in 2025, according to the IMF.

The UK-India FTA: Trade policy meets transport infrastructure

The UK-India Free Trade Agreement, finalised in mid 2025, is expected to eliminate tariffs on up to 90 percent of traded goods within the next decade. Equally significant are its non-tariff provisions: digital customs corridors, mutual recognition of standards, and express cargo facilitation. These measures aim to enhance the flow of high-value, time-sensitive goods—a

segment where air freight is indispensable.

According to the UK's Department for Business and Trade, the FTA could increase bilateral trade by over US\$12.5 billion within five years. Much of this growth will depend on the efficiency of logistics networks. As Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Government of India noted, "Trade policy alone cannot move goods—connectivity must evolve alongside it. The FTA's gains are realised only when transport and regulatory ecosystems are synchronised."

IndiGo's Mumbai-Heathrow route thus becomes part of the policy architecture enabling the FTA's success. It reduces the supply chain friction associated with transshipments via Dubai or Doha and complements India's National Logistics Policy (NLP) goal of lowering logistics costs from 13–14 percent of GDP to global benchmarks of 8–10 percent.

What moves between India and the UK

The air cargo relationship between India and the UK is characterised by asymmetry and value density. India exports pharmaceutical formulations, gems, textiles, leather goods, and perishables, while importing aerospace components, high-end machinery, and medical instruments.

- Pharmaceuticals remain the top contributor, representing nearly 40 percent of India's air cargo exports to the UK. The FTA's tariff

concessions on healthcare and life sciences will further strengthen this trade.

- Engineering goods, worth over US\$2 billion in 2024, form another significant stream, supported by the UK's demand for automotive components and India's growing EV supply base.
- High-value perishables, including seafood and cut flowers, rely on direct flights to maintain freshness and minimise losses—a market segment IndiGo can tap into through its Mumbai base, close to agricultural export clusters.
- On the inbound side, UK-origin aerospace and defence components destined for India's manufacturing zones align with the government's "Make in India" initiative, which encourages domestic assembly and re-export.

"IndiGo's new service enhances the UK's access to a dynamic South Asian market," said Ross Baker, Chief Customer Officer at Heathrow. "The route will support both passenger mobility and time-critical cargo flows, particularly in sectors where supply chain precision is essential—such as pharmaceuticals and technology."

"Entering Heathrow is not only a commercial milestone—it's a commitment to deeper connectivity between two economies driving innovation and trade," Pieter Elbers, IndiGo CEO, added.



UNLOCKING VALUE IN DATA

BY Edward HARDY

HISTORICALLY, data served a narrow function in airfreight—tracking service milestones, assessing on-time performance, or quantifying market share. These operational benchmarks were useful, but largely retrospective, offering a rearview mirror on performance rather than a steering wheel for decision-making.

Today, with the integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and advanced forecasting models, data has become a commercial asset. It enables predictive insights—anticipating flight capacity, identifying optimal load factors, and setting smarter hurdle rates to avoid underpriced cargo. Instead of simply recording what has happened, data now shapes what happens next. In practical terms, this means higher revenue potential, better network utilisation, and improved financial resilience. What was once passive has become strategic—data, in modern airfreight, is no longer just information; it's intelligence.

"A lot of the conversation that we're having, everybody wants to have data," Cedric Millet, President of CargoTech, explained. "We talk about data, we talk about the fact that they have data, but we don't necessarily talk about facts. We don't necessarily talk about what it [can] do with the data. And that's where our advisor role comes.

"There are certain ways to analyse the market, to take the relevant commercial decisions, and there's also certain ways to constantly screen the market, screen competition, screen capacity development, to be able to adapt the decision-making."

Take capacity forecasting, for example. Using predictive models, companies can estimate the best belly space usage on a flight, improving load factors by "one or two points." This seemingly modest increase translates into millions of dollars in revenue. "You make use of unused

capacity by the percentage division by the banks," he explained.

Another major application? Predictive revenue management. "You predict what your hurdle rate should be by forecasting the demands, and therefore you don't accept on your flight the lower-paying shipments," Millet said.

Then there's the Sales Cockpit — CargoTech's market screening and sales optimisation platform. "Some of the airlines that have implemented Sales Cockpit are counting now the benefits in millions," Millet said. "It's just making use of empty space or targeting the right flows on your flights to maximise your network contribution."

The 80 percent rule

As the industry talks about "One Record" and standardised digital documentation, Millet brings a clear-eyed pragmatism to the conversation. "I mean, I don't think you will ever be able to standardise completely. That's, I think, a certainty," he outlined.

Rather than chase the elusive goal of perfect standardisation, Millet advises a strategy rooted in practicality — aim for 80 percent reliability and build systems around that. "How do you reach that 80 percent reliability in the data that you're getting?" he asked.

"That's one of the new services that CargoTech is offering, actually — data engineering," Millet continued. Through this offering, CargoTech helps clients integrate disparate data sources, align definitions, and clean up inconsistencies. "Trying to make the best of it, engineer the data and make use of it to take good commercial decisions."

This approach acknowledges the real-world complexity of air freight's digital ecosystem — a world full of legacy systems, inconsistent

standards, and resource-strapped carriers. For Millet, progress lies not in perfect systems, but in flexible, intelligent ones that can adapt, compensate, and evolve.

"You also have technology, or AI or machine learning that can basically correct the incomplete data, or correct the not necessarily completely clean data," he added. "Do we believe that in 10 years we will have a complete set of standards for data? Maybe. But what would be the adoption? That's a question mark."

The digital journey

Millet is quick to acknowledge the disparity in digital readiness across the industry: "You have big airlines with big cargo divisions that have the means and the willingness to transform digitally," he noted. "You have smaller airlines that have the willingness to do so, but they may not have the capabilities — both financially or in terms of manpower."

Everyone is somewhere on the digital journey, he emphasises, and the industry must stop expecting a one-size-fits-all approach. "There's still room to grow, even for the one[s] that are the most mature, because technology is basically changing everything and always innovating."

Here's where CargoTech's strength lies — in modularity and adaptability. "There is a solution for any kind of partner or customer that is somewhere within the digital journey," Millet explained.

Millet compares it to car shopping: "Not everybody can afford a Ferrari... not that we have Ferrari products, but it's always complicated when you come to the financial part of things." The challenge isn't just affordability — it's also implementation capacity. "That's where the complexity starts," he stated.

Flexibility over rigidity

What makes CargoTech stand out isn't just its breadth of tools — it's the responsiveness of its roadmap. "When we defined the roadmap of all the CargoTech companies, we basically knew the pain points that the different players were having," Millet outlined.

But once the tools hit the ground, the roadmap doesn't remain static. "We also listen to their extra needs, and then we change a little bit... or maybe we add new solutions." One example is the decision to fast-track the development of a revenue management system instead of a cargo management system based on market demand. "We accelerated the development of the revenue management solutions and de-prioritised a little bit the CMS," he expressed.

A digital ecosystem

When asked what lessons the broader industry can take from CargoTech's ecosystem model, Millet resists positioning it as a universal template. "We're not saying that we are the model that everybody should be following," he expressed. "There's not only one model to all the industry players."

Instead, he believes it's about offering a full scope of solutions, giving partners the ability to "pick and choose" what fits their needs. "We are trying to foster collaboration between different members of CargoTech... offering package deals that address the full scope of issues," he says.

Ultimately, the mission is to empower — not dictate. "There's always a local flavour. There's always a culture in an airline. There's always a different phase," Millet concluded. "Are you into a growth phase... or optimisation phase? So there's not one answer to all the questions."

SKY PACIFIC
AIR SERVICES CO., LTD.

Air Cargo & Passenger
GSSA

SERVE LOCALLY, ACT GLOBALLY
info@skypac.co.th www.skypac.co.th

- Airline Representation Cargo & Passenger
- Air Charter Solutions
- Flight Supervision & Support Services
- Aviation Services



Your Trusted Air Cargo

GSSA Partner

With our extensive GSSA expertise, global network, and seamless operations, we deliver cargo management solutions that are innovative, efficient, and reliable.

40+ Local Market Expertise
Years

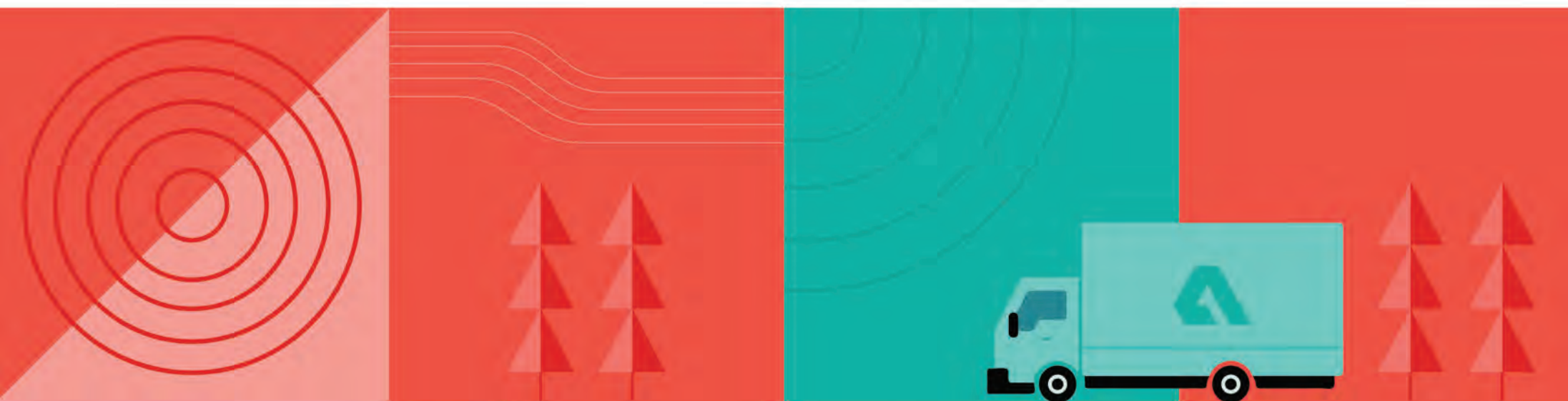
400+ Global Aviation experts
Employees

25+ Growing global presence
Cities

25+ Propelling growth for our partners
Airlines

Partner with us today and elevate your airline's cargo potential!
Write to us at partner@aeroprime.in

Aeroprime



India Sub-continent | United Kingdom | United Arab Emirates | Thailand

www.aeroprime.com



REDEFINING AIR CARGO WITH NEW-AGE GSSA SERVICES

In today's rapidly evolving aviation landscape, airlines are under constant pressure to expand their networks, optimize operations, and adapt to changing customer needs. Global expansion, however, comes with challenges, from navigating regulatory complexities and high setup costs to building local relationships and ensuring smooth operations. The air cargo industry is at a turning point, driven by rapid digital transformation and evolving market demands. Aeroprime Group is shaping the future of cargo representation, delivering modern GSSA solutions that help airlines expand efficiently and navigate complex markets with ease.

Expanding Global Reach with Smart GSSA Solutions

Aeroprime helps airlines unlock new markets without heavy capital investment. Acting as their local face, we provide a ready-to-operate infrastructure backed by deep regional knowledge and a strong distribution network. From India to emerging hubs across Asia and beyond, our proven expertise allows airlines to establish a footprint quickly, cost-effectively, and with minimal risk.

Our partnerships with leading carriers showcase how airlines can seamlessly scale into high-growth markets by leveraging our trusted presence and relationships with freight forwarders, shippers, and regulatory bodies.

Driving Cargo Excellence with Smart Digital Tools

Traditional cargo operations are being redefined by digitalization, and Aeroprime is at the forefront of this transformation. We offer a suite of digitally enabled GSSA solutions designed to enhance revenues and drive efficiencies:

- **Intelligent Booking Platforms (CargoNext):** A next-gen tool that simplifies bookings with real-time shipment management, payment, and tracking.
- **AI-Driven Analytics & Revenue Optimization:** Harnessing predictive insights to maximize capacity utilization and improve yields.
- **Seamless Integrations:** Connecting airlines, freight forwarders, and ground handlers for end-to-end operational efficiency.



At Aeroprime, we focus on maximizing yield through a strategically balanced cargo mix that combines strong market insight with operational precision. Our approach centers on high-yielding cargo and identifying the right blend of destinations and routes to deliver sustained profitability for our airline partners. Cargo doesn't speak, but its journey does. That's why every stage, from booking to tracking, handling, and transit, is executed with meticulous attention to detail. Reliability and consistency are the

cornerstones of trust in air logistics, and they define the Aeroprime experience.

We also recognize that a successful cargo strategy isn't just about volume, it's about value. By creating the right equilibrium between dense and volumetric

cargo, aligning commodity types with the most profitable trade lanes, and continuously evaluating performance through data-driven insights, we help airlines build resilient and profitable cargo portfolios. Our focus on diversifying revenue streams, targeting niche and underserved markets, and optimizing the destination mix ensures that every kilogram carried contributes not just to immediate returns but to long-term network growth and market strength.

By combining data-driven insights with customer-centric services, we ensure airlines can scale smarter and faster in competitive markets

Local Expertise Meets Global Standards

Market knowledge is a critical differentiator. Aeroprime's teams bring a deep understanding of local regulations, cultural nuances, and competitive dynamics. This enables airlines to avoid costly missteps and to design strategies tailored for success. Whether it's guiding compliance with aviation authorities, coordinating ground handling, or engaging directly with forwarders, we act as a true strategic partner, not just a vendor.

Flexible, Scalable, Future-Ready

A key advantage of working with Aeroprime lies in the scalability and flexibility of our model. Airlines can test new markets without committing to heavy overheads, and scale up based on performance. Our ability to adapt to dynamic market conditions ensures that carriers remain agile while focusing on their core operations.

Setting the Benchmark in Air Cargo

At Aeroprime Group, we don't just provide GSSA services; we set the benchmark for next-generation cargo distribution. By blending digital innovation, strong industry relationships, and operational excellence, we empower airlines to thrive in today's competitive air cargo market.

As the industry grows towards \$214 billion by 2029, the need for intelligent, technology-driven GSSA partnerships has never been greater. Aeroprime Group stands ready as a trusted partner, helping airlines expand reach, optimize revenues, and embrace the digital future of air cargo.

Discover how Aeroprime can transform your cargo operations. Visit www.aeroprime.com or write to us at partner@aeroprime.com



GROWTH AND INNOVATION



BY Anastasiya SIMSEK

GLOBAL trade is under pressure. Airfreight demand is recovering unevenly. Digitalisation is accelerating, but with growing gaps between leaders and laggards. Against this backdrop, Cathay Cargo is doing more than returning to the skies after Covid—it's building a stronger and more adaptive business, able to win out through the inevitable business cycles that are a

characteristic of the industry. From AI-led pricing and regional connectivity in the Greater Bay Area to specialist cargo solution verticals and a major fleet upgrade, the airline is reshaping how it competes in the post-pandemic cargo market.

"We define success through the eyes of our customer," says Tom Owen, Director Cargo at Cathay Cargo. "And that is around our customers'

willingness to work with us and to ship cargo on us. We measure our customers' response regularly with the Net Promoter Score."

But success, Owen notes, doesn't stop at the customer interface. "On the flip side, it's the people of Cathay Cargo and all who support us that make a difference," he says. "We benchmark closely our engagement scores and the happiness of our people. If you have a collective group of motivated, efficient and engaged employees working for Cathay Cargo, then our customers are more likely to want to work with us. And we are very proud of the fact that we do!"

Strength and strategy

Cathay Cargo's post-pandemic trajectory is underpinned by its Hong Kong base and its expansive reach. "We now fly to over 100 destinations to which carry cargo, both in our 20 747 freighters and in the 160 extensive passenger aircraft bellies of Cathay Group, and that's a very significant strength, and we'll continue to build on that," Owen says. That reach will be bolstered further by the acquisition of six new Airbus A350F freighters, part of a potential order of up to 26 of these state-of-the-art freighter aircraft.

Owen ties this investment directly to long-term trends in regional and global trade. "We are committed to the continued growth of the Hong Kong international aviation and logistics hub, with more than HK\$100 billion investments by our airline group, coinciding with the commissioning of the [HKIA] Three-Runway System," he says. The new runway and the wider Greater Bay Area strategy enable Cathay Cargo to grow capacity and deepen intermodal integration between air, land, and sea.

In the face of rerouted trade flows, particularly between the Chinese Mainland, Southeast Asia, and the USA, Cathay Cargo has leaned into its flexibility. "We've recently seen less cargo coming out of the Chinese Mainland to the USA. Conversely, we've seen more cargo coming out of Southeast Asia," says Owen. "There's been a slowdown in air cargo flows across the Pacific from China. Whether that extends to the long term largely depends... on the future negotiations between the two big trading partners. But we believe e-commerce in particular will see lower volumes by air into the USA ahead, as the e-commerce platforms adapt their business models".

Yet within Asia, the picture looks more consistent. "There's definitely intra-Asian trade happening. We've been seeing very interesting growth in trade flows between Southeast and Northeast Asia, particularly around various industrial projects that are starting up," he says. "That will lead to the need for air cargo. And that's not just e-commerce but a wide range of industrial, project based and high tech products. Newly built manufacturing plants in SE Asia may also in future see more goods flowing into the USA, so we are always on the lookout for where the business is, and can adjust our capacity accordingly."

Specialist solutions

Digital progress is one of three core priorities for Cathay Cargo, alongside its specialist verticals and regional integration. "We started to use AI, for instance, around revenue management," Owen says. "We've also started to use AI utilising large language models to help understand how we can dissect lots of information and give it to our customers and to our staff."

Cathay Cargo has also become the

leading airline to implement IATA's ONE Record protocols into daily operations. "One of the key challenges in moving from pilot to production was assisting the forwarder's IT team in identifying the scope of data exchange," the airline explains. "GLS's, Cathay Cargo's internal technology company, with its expert knowledge was invaluable... Their data converter service ensured a seamless data exchange between ONE Record and traditional channels."

For Owen, digitalisation isn't a threat to the human core of cargo. "The industry thrives on people interactions. That is why we all love it so! But AI can help make people's work lives easier... I see AI freeing up the people of cargo from repetitive data entry type jobs, ... to actually provide more time to understand customers' needs, looking for new opportunities, and ensuring safe and efficient operations."

The strategy also leans heavily on product differentiation. "We have a strategy which we've built upon for a number of years now to truly differentiate our service and solution capability from others. This is core to our Brand positioning where we boldly state that "We Know How",

One of the key pillars we have is investing in is our nine solution verticals," Owen says. These include solutions from pharmaceuticals and courier to live animals and e-commerce. All these solutions have been developed and improved and then released to the market with direct customer input.

Hong Kong's standing

Being based in the world's top-ranked air cargo airport is no small asset. "Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has once again been named number one in the world for air cargo," Cathay Cargo notes. "We contribute approximately 30 percent of HKIA's total cargo throughput."

The Three-Runway System, intermodal investments, and new digital tools reinforce Hong Kong's importance as a logistics hub, particularly within the Greater Bay Area (GBA). "The 3RS complements our intermodal transshipment services in the GBA, facilitating efficient connections between air, land, and sea," Cathay Cargo states.

Owen sees Hong Kong as a strategic centre of influence. It was one of the reasons they were the host airline for the recent TIACA executive Summit in Hong Kong "This event [TIACA Executive Summit] provides a valuable platform to showcase Hong Kong's pivotal role in the global supply chain and Cathay Cargo's extensive network that links Asia with the rest of the world," he says.

With a cautiously optimistic eye on the future, Cathay Cargo is also setting expectations for the broader industry. "We are eager to see this year's [TIACA] event generate meaningful discussions and actionable outcomes across key industry [themes]," the airline says, citing digitalisation, sustainability, and regulatory reform as its core interests.

The message from Owen is clear: agility, innovation, and trained people are Cathay Cargo's edge. "It's a competitive environment," he says. "We differentiate ourselves primarily around the quality of the training we have in our people, the infrastructure that we have... and also the connectivity and reach."

That trio—people, platform, and positioning—may be Cathay Cargo's most durable strategic advantage in its journey to become the Best Air Cargo Carrier in the world.



100% NEUTRAL AIR FREIGHT WHOLESALERS



You talk, we listen.



WWW.CARGO-NET.CO.UK



SALES@CARGO-NET.CO.UK



THE SMART WAY TO LIGHTER, MORE EFFICIENT, SUSTAINABLE AIR CARGO OPERATIONS

Fuel consumption is a key cost driver in air cargo. Reducing weight directly lowers fuel consumption and leads to significant cost savings. Lighter pallets and packaging materials help reduce weight, cut fuel costs, speed up handling, ease strain on workers and equipment, enhance efficiency, and minimise environmental impact—resulting in greater profitability and sustainability.

In air cargo, every kilogram matters, every second counts

Traditional wooden beams or planks used in air cargo transportation add unnecessary weight, resulting in higher costs and emissions. **By replacing the square timbers used to create the overhang on the ULD with lightweight AirCargoRunners, airlines and ground handlers can significantly improve efficiency and sustainability. Even a small weight reduction of 50 kg per flight can lead to substantial fuel savings.** For example, on the Helsinki-Seoul route, a weight reduction of 50 kg per flight, multiplied by 354 flights in one year, would result in estimated annual fuel savings of 8,500 kg—the impact is significant. **Eltete's AirCargoRunner is a strong, lightweight, and 100% recyclable alternative to wooden beams.** Designed for durability without adding extra weight, it optimises payload capacity, allowing airlines to transport more cargo per flight and maximise revenue. Additionally, it improves cargo handling by reducing ground delays and minimising strain on equipment and personnel. The lighter weight leads to lower fuel consumption, cutting CO₂ emissions and supporting environmental initiatives. AirCargoRunner, with its strength validated by independent labs and ISPM-15 compliance, is globally accepted without restrictions or fumigation costs, underscoring its reliability and operational benefits in the air cargo industry.



Unlocking Cost and CO₂ Savings at Scale

The financial and environmental benefits extend far beyond a single flight. On a fleet level, **replacing traditional beams with AirCargoRunner unlocks significant savings.** With fuel prices fluctuating and a CO₂ emission factor of 3.16 kg per kg of fuel burned, the weight savings quickly add up. Imagine a medium-sized airline operating 20–100 aircraft—how much could they save annually by making this simple switch?

Weight optimisation doesn't stop with AirCargoRunner. Airlines and handlers can further enhance efficiency by incorporating **AirCargoPallets, AirCargoBoard80, and AirCargoBoxes** into their operations. These solutions provide added flexibility, ensuring that last-minute cargo adjustments don't affect performance.



Rethink weight in air cargo and unlock new opportunities for cost savings, efficiency, and sustainability. Our team is ready to support you in making a smooth transition to AirCargoRunner and our full range of lightweight materials to optimise your operations.

Learn more at www.aircargopackaging.com or reach out to us directly at info1@eltete.com.

Eltete TPM is one of the global leaders in sustainable transport packaging solutions, driven by the motto 3R—Reduce, Replace, Recycle. With a worldwide network and over 50 years of expertise in eco-friendly packaging, we help businesses transition from unsustainable materials to cost-effective, sustainable solutions that reduce both costs and CO₂ emissions while ensuring ease of recycling. Our innovative products are designed to meet the highest industry standards, offering reliable, environmentally responsible alternatives for modern, sustainable logistics.

Be ready to find the right balance and reach new markets

Go **all the way** by expanding your reach quickly
and efficiently using Maersk Air Freight.



Scan the QR code
to know more



INDIA'S GST 2.0 REFORM



BY **Ajinkya GURAV**

India's newly unveiled Goods and Services Tax (GST) 2.0 reforms have introduced one of the country's most significant fiscal shifts in nearly a decade, with wide-reaching implications for air cargo, global supply chains, and trade policy. Presented against a backdrop of intensifying tariff disputes with the United States, renewed BRICS initiatives, and evolving trade alignments under the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the reform signals India's intent to strengthen its position as a central node in global logistics.

The GST overhaul focuses on simplifying rate structures and reducing taxation on core logistics and infrastructure inputs—including trucks, tyres, cement, and steel—components that underpin the cost of freight and cargo-handling infrastructure. The move is designed to improve supply chain efficiency and competitiveness in a market where logistics costs are estimated at 13–14 percent of GDP, compared with 8–9 percent in advanced economies

such as Singapore and Germany.

"By rationalising taxes on core infrastructure and logistics components, GST 2.0 will accelerate domestic consumption and stimulate trade volumes," said Rizwan Soomar, CEO & Managing Director, Middle East, North Africa & India Subcontinent, DP World. "This transformative move strengthens India's supply chain backbone and reinforces confidence in India's growth story. DP World, with its integrated ports, terminals, rail connectivity, and digital platforms, is uniquely positioned to support this momentum."

Strategic beneficiary

Air cargo is poised to be one of the biggest winners of GST 2.0. India's international air cargo volumes grew 8.6 percent year-on-year in H1 2025, driven by pharmaceuticals, automotive components, and cross-border e-commerce. Rationalised tax rates on logistics infrastructure and transport assets could enable faster capacity expansion at airports and reduce freight rates by three to five percent over the next two years.

Cargo terminals at metro airports—Delhi, Mumbai,

Bengaluru, and Hyderabad—are already under pressure from surging e-commerce and perishables trade. Lower GST rates on construction materials and specialised cargo-handling equipment may accelerate investment in warehousing and temperature-controlled facilities, helping India meet growing demand for high-value, time-sensitive shipments.

The reforms align with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, a multi-trillion-rupee initiative to develop integrated multimodal freight corridors. By reducing bottlenecks in first- and last-mile connectivity through lower taxation on road assets, GST 2.0 could create an ecosystem where air cargo integrates more effectively with road, rail, and coastal shipping networks.

Navigating global tensions

India's tax overhaul coincides with heightened trade tensions and shifting global supply chains. The United States' decision to escalate tariffs on key imports, including automotive parts and electronics, has complicated export strategies for Indian manufacturers. Meanwhile, BRICS nations are expanding trade settlements in local currencies to reduce reliance on the US dollar, and the SCO Summit in China has highlighted renewed focus on Eurasian logistics corridors.

For India, GST 2.0 serves as a domestic policy lever to counter these external disruptions. By reducing costs and simplifying compliance, the reforms aim to position India as a competitive alternative manufacturing and logistics hub. A senior trade advisor at the Ministry of Commerce stated that "efficient taxation has become a trade negotiation tool; it directly impacts how foreign investors and shippers assess the ease of routing through India."

Unlocking potential

The tax reform also dovetails with the UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), expected to boost bilateral trade by £25.5 billion annually by 2040 (UK Department for Business and Trade). Lower freight costs, simplified tax credits, and harmonised digital compliance measures could help Indian exporters capitalise on tariff-free market access in sectors like pharmaceuticals, textiles, and engineering goods.

This has direct implications for the air cargo industry. Dedicated freighter routes between India and the UK are likely to increase, particularly for temperature-sensitive goods. Logistics providers are already exploring pharma corridors between Mumbai, Hyderabad, and London Heathrow, with digitalised customs processes and real-time visibility platforms ensuring regulatory compliance.

Digitalisation and SME integration

GST 2.0 also prioritises digital compliance, which will benefit small and medium exporters and air express operators. The introduction of automated returns, simplified credit flows, and e-invoicing is expected to reduce administrative costs for high-volume, low-margin sectors like cross-border e-commerce.

This digital integration is crucial for air cargo's future growth. Cross-border e-commerce shipments from India are forecast to reach USD 200 billion by 2030 (NASSCOM), with express integrators and freighter operators poised to capture a larger share of this trade. Streamlined tax processes will enable SMEs to access international markets more easily, enhancing cargo throughput at secondary airports such as Jaipur, Nagpur, and Visakhapatnam.

EUROCARGOAVIATION

- ✓ Global expertise with local market knowledge
- ✓ Motivated & Experienced teams
- ✓ Independent GSSA with strong financial background

We CARE

THE NETHERLANDS • BELGIUM • NORWAY • SWEDEN • DENMARK • FINLAND • UNITED KINGDOM • IRELAND • FRANCE • SPAIN • ITALY
GERMANY • AUSTRIA • SWITZERLAND • POLAND • BALTICS • CHINA • HONG KONG • UNITED STATES OF AMERICA • CANADA • UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

📍 Aalsmeerderdijk 158A • 1438 AX Oude Meer • Netherlands 📞 +31(0) 20 446 0982 ✉ marketing@eurocargoaviation.com 🌐 eurocargoaviation.com



RESHAPING AIR CARGO OPERATIONS

BY Edward HARDY

Online booking platforms, real-time capacity monitoring, and data-driven insights are enabling more agile decision-making, while regional variations in adoption are creating complex operational landscapes. European and U.S. markets lead in digital engagement, whereas Southeast Asia and Latin America are still expanding their digital footprint. Yet even in the most technologically advanced markets, manual oversight remains essential. Amendments, specialised shipments, and post-flight queries require human intervention to

ensure profitability and reliability.

Frederick Overton, Global Head of Cargo at AVIAREPS, notes: "Digitalisation is reshaping the air cargo industry, and for a GSSA like AVIAREPS, it's not a threat but an opportunity to enhance our services. Even digital bookings require manual oversight—whether it's for amendments, specialised shipments, or post-flight queries—so managing profitability across channels is critical."

Leveraging local expertise

Global networks remain a core competitive advantage in cargo operations. AVIAREPS, with 76 offices across 71 countries, is a prime example of

how local presence can complement digital strategy. Overton emphasises that the combination of local knowledge and actionable data drives measurable results: "Every market has its own export profile and competitive landscape, and this combination of local knowledge and actionable data enables us to deliver tangible results for our airline partners."

The integration of digital tools allows GSAs to optimise airline offers across multiple platforms. "To succeed in digital booking ecosystems, you need what I call a 'fully-stocked shop window,'" says Overton. "Every available flight, truck option, and product offering must be showing. This is a shared responsibility: the airline ensures API connections and systems are in place, while we as the GSA monitor local setups, resolve restrictions, and ensure station capabilities are accurately reflected online."

The move toward digitalisation is not purely operational. It also impacts commercial strategy. Partnerships with data providers such as Rotate, which supplies real-time cargo capacity intelligence, and Webcargo by Freightos, which distributes rates for airlines lacking API connectivity, allow GSAs to act as intermediaries that bring smaller carriers into the digital ecosystem. Overton explains: "This has been particularly valuable for smaller airlines who may not have the investment capability to do this themselves and allows us to really add value to the GSA partnership."

Driving commercial growth in a digital age

Digital tools alone do not drive growth—commercial strategy, operational expertise, and market intelligence remain critical levers. For airlines expanding post-COVID, establishing local offices

is often impractical. Overton highlights how a GSA can fill that gap: "Partnering with AVIAREPS allows airlines to immediately tap into our local knowledge and networks, driving sales and market share without the upfront cost of building an in-house presence."

High-value cargo products such as pharmaceuticals, live animals, and time-critical shipments require specialised handling and expert sales teams. Overton points out that this dual approach—technology plus human expertise—is central to capturing premium yields: "Our teams are fully trained to understand each product's unique requirements and to communicate those effectively to freight forwarders. Additionally, round-the-clock service is no longer optional—our global contact centres ensure that we can support high-value shipments at any time of day."

Existing passenger airline relationships also provide a springboard for cargo operations. "Being the world's largest and most successful passenger GSA helps us get a 'foot in the door' with airlines when introducing our cargo services," Overton says. This credibility allows AVIAREPS to secure combined passenger-and-cargo contracts, offering airlines a one-stop solution. Revenue accounting, settlement, and dispute resolution are managed centrally, minimising leakage and ensuring partners remain confident in operational integrity.

Looking ahead, AVIAREPS plans to expand its airline partnerships by at least 10–20 in the next year while continuing to invest in digitalisation. Overton sums up the strategy: "Our focus is on growth and digital transformation. We'll continue advancing our digitalisation strategy to ensure we are meeting—and exceeding—the evolving needs of our airline partners."

More than cargo

United in
XCR Airport proudly support



DIGITALISING ULD MANAGEMENT

BY Anastasiya SIMSEK

For decades, unit load devices (ULDs) have been an unavoidable but often overlooked cost in air cargo. Pallets and containers move the world's freight, yet airlines frequently lose track of them, lease excess units, or pay to reposition empty equipment. In a sector squeezed by fuel costs, capital pressures and fluctuating demand, that inefficiency is increasingly untenable.

Bernhard Kindelbacher, CEO of ACL Airshop, argues that the industry is finally starting to treat ULDs not as passive hardware but as data-rich assets.

"What we can do is 'IoT-ize' the pallet — making sure it tells us where it is, then use predictive analysis so the right pallet is in the right place, in the right condition," he told Air Cargo Week. "Airlines and handlers can use this information to make processes more efficient, faster, and ultimately serve customers better."

From manual tracking to predictive management

Despite air cargo's digital ambitions, much of ULD management is still manual. Airlines depend on spreadsheets, phone calls and fragmented ground records to know where their stock is — or isn't.

That lag costs money.

"One important topic is whether we have the data available in the right format," Kindelbacher said. "We still use a lot of manual processes, but not enough real-time actions. Sharing data across the chain would increase efficiency in each process, while also giving transparency and ideas to the next partner."

The case for change is simple. An airline that misplaces ULDs must either lease additional units at short notice or purchase new ones. In both cases, capital is tied up unnecessarily. Mismanagement can also delay flights, creating aircraft-on-ground risks. By digitalising tracking, carriers gain the ability to repatriate pallets more quickly, optimise network planning, and reduce both leasing costs and operational risk.

Examples from the field

ACL Airshop has worked with carriers facing precisely these challenges. "Normally when we work with airlines, we see that they have pallets lying around in multiple stations and don't know exactly where they are," Kindelbacher explained. "With our technology, we can identify the position, we can repatriate faster, and make the stock visible. That reduces costs — you don't have to lease extra pallets or purchase new ones — and you also reduce aircraft on ground incidents."

The company has invested in IoT-enabled devices that transmit location and condition data in real time. Layered with predictive analytics, these tools provide early warnings when a unit is likely to be needed elsewhere or is at risk of being stranded. The result is a shift from reactive ULD management to proactive planning.

A wider industry challenge

Kindelbacher places ULD management within the broader struggles of air cargo digitalisation. While platforms and visibility tools have advanced in booking, pricing and tracking freight, the ground layer still lags. "We still use a lot of manual processes," he repeated. "The improvement could be that we all share the data among each other in the chain, using it to increase efficiency in our own processes, but also to give transparency and ideas to the next partner."

That collaboration remains difficult in a fragmented ecosystem where ground handlers, airlines, leasing companies and repair providers each use different systems. But pressure is mounting. Rising fuel costs, higher interest rates and the cost of capital are forcing carriers to squeeze every available saving out of operations.

"Innovation has to be practical," Kindelbacher said. "It's about solving real problems — misplaced ULDs, excess leasing costs, inefficiencies in repair. Those are the things that weigh on airlines, and that's where digitalisation can make an immediate impact."

The potential is significant. The value of the misplaced/lost ULDs is estimated at around \$55 Mio (5 percent of the global fleet). However, a multiple of this amount is spent to search, retrieve, find, look for alternatives; in some cases, revenue cargo has to be left behind.

Digitalising ULD management is not glamorous, but it is foundational. Without accurate, real-time visibility of assets, the rest of the industry's digital ambitions risk falling short.

"It's about collaboration across the ecosystem," he said. "If data is shared in the right way, everybody benefits - efficiency goes up, costs go down, and customers get a better service."

XCR AIRPORT
Powered by EPGAV

D, we carry hope.

purpose.
es Breast Cancer Awareness.



SINGAPORE LOOKS TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF REGIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS

BY Edward HARDY



“Attendees will leave with insights into how technology and talent together create stronger, more adaptive logistics systems.”

Singapore is set to become the epicentre of logistics innovation as transport logistic Southeast Asia & air cargo Southeast Asia 2025 prepares to open its doors. Hosted by MMI Asia, the event promises to bring together more than 10,000 professionals, 120 exhibitors from 27 countries, and over 150 industry leaders from across the globe. From digital transformation and sustainability to human capital and regional infrastructure, the event aims to chart the future of how goods move through one of the world’s fastest-growing trade corridors.

Michael Wilton, CEO and Managing Director of MMI Asia, said the event “serves as a catalyst for regional transformation—connecting industry leaders, innovators, and emerging talent to shape the future of logistics across ASEAN and beyond.”

Resilient supply chains in an uncertain world

The Main Stage will dive headfirst into the pressing realities shaping global logistics. “We’re addressing the twin forces reshaping supply chains today: U.S. tariff shifts and Southeast Asia’s rapid rise as a manufacturing and logistics hub,” said Wilton. The keynote, “From Fragile to Future-Proof: How Digital Tools and Human Talent Build Truly Resilient Logistics Networks” by Radu Palamariu, Group CEO of Alcott Global, sets the tone for a programme dedicated to resilience and adaptability.

Wilton added that the discussions will go far beyond theory. “Panels such as ‘Southeast Asia’s Transport and Logistics Horizon’ and ‘Shaping the Future of Supply Chains – Navigating Transformation Successfully’ feature leaders from Google, Boeing, and dsm-Firmenich, discussing how companies are diversifying sourcing, investing in ASEAN infrastructure, and leveraging AI-driven planning,” he said. These conversations will explore how logistics operators can not only manage tariff-related risks but also seize the opportunities

presented by the region’s projected seven percent trade growth and US\$46 billion in FDI inflows.

“The key takeaway is resilience through strategy and innovation,” Wilton noted. “Attendees will leave with insights into how technology and talent together create stronger, more adaptive logistics systems.”

The Changi advantage

A major highlight of the event will be the Centre Stage sessions, spotlighting the infrastructure driving Southeast Asia’s airfreight growth. “One of our most anticipated sessions is ‘Blueprint for Establishing a Regional Air Cargo Hub’ by Lim Ching Kiat, EVP of Changi Airport Group,” said Wilton. “It will give participants an insider’s view of Terminal 5 and how it’s designed to strengthen Singapore’s position as a strategic logistics hub.”

Terminal 5, currently under development, is being built with automation, SAF-ready infrastructure, and advanced cargo handling systems—features that Wilton believes will “significantly boost ASEAN connectivity, enabling faster, more efficient cargo flows across key trade lanes.”

Supporting sessions such as “Sustainable Growth of Air Cargo in Southeast Asia”—featuring executives from Etihad Airways Cargo, Qatar Airways Cargo, and MAB Kargo—will also explore how sustainability and capacity growth can coexist. “These developments support regional integration and resilience, positioning Southeast Asia as a global logistics gateway,” said Wilton.

The future of integrated logistics

For Wilton, one of the event’s defining features is its focus on actionable innovation. “Our Exhibitor Seminars demonstrate how AI, IoT, and predictive analytics are being used today to improve efficiency



13

and collaboration," he said. Sessions include "Digitalisation with AI" by Cargo Community Network, "Introduction to Siemens Digital Logistics Portfolio," and "From Data to Decisions – AI and Visibility in the Future of Supply Chain Management" by BlueBox Systems.

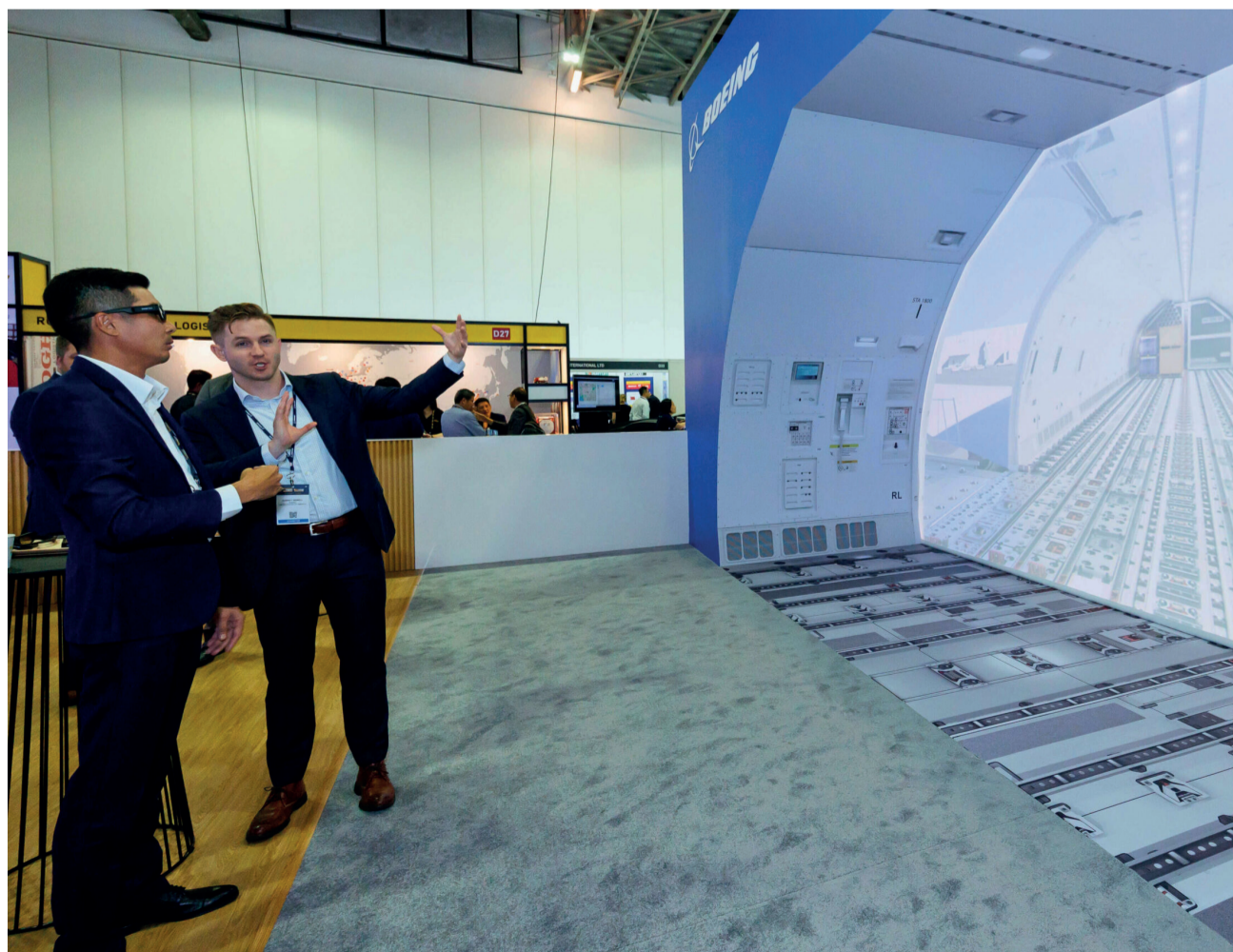
However, Wilton is quick to point out that technology alone is not the answer. "Sessions like 'Blame the Software? It's Not Just the Tech That's Holding You Back' by Yojee Solutions dig into why digitalisation projects fail," he said. "It's about leadership alignment, change management, and cultural readiness. You can't build a digital supply chain without addressing the human side."

The sustainability agenda is equally central to the event. Day 2, themed "Paving the Way for a Greener Future," will host panels such as "Achieving Net-Zero Carbon Emissions Goal with Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)," featuring Singapore Airlines and Boeing, alongside "Embedding Scope 3 to Progress towards Net Zero" with Toll Group and Wilhelmsen Ships Service. "These sessions provide clear, actionable roadmaps for decarbonisation," Wilton said. "Southeast Asia has the potential to supply 12 percent of global SAF demand by 2050—and we're showing how that can become reality."

The next connection

Beyond its panels and presentations, the event will also serve as a major networking platform. With its dedicated event app for one-to-one meetings, Wilton said, "We're ensuring every participant—whether they're a startup, policymaker, or global enterprise—can build meaningful partnerships."

The event will also nurture future talent through Future Leaders' Day, featuring speakers from Alcott Global, Freightos Group, and MAB Kargo. "We're giving young professionals access to mentorship, career insights, and the skills they'll need for leadership in an evolving logistics industry," he added.



THE SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY REDEFINING GLOBAL TRADE

BY Edward HARDY



“Risk hedging is the new global supply chain management.”

For decades, China has been the backbone of global manufacturing. But rising costs, political tensions, and repeated disruptions have forced companies to rethink how and where they produce goods. Enter the “China Plus X” strategy — a multi-shoring approach that aims to reduce dependency on any single country and build supply chains that are more resilient, more agile, and ultimately more secure. It marks a clear shift from efficiency at all costs, to resilience at all costs.

From China Plus One to China Plus X

The idea of diversifying production away from China is not new. Around 2019, many manufacturers started adopting a “China Plus One” strategy, establishing an additional base outside China to hedge against risk. But as a report by DHL, coauthored by Lisa Harrington, President of the Harrington Group and Robert H. Smith, Senior Fellow

at the School of Business, University of Maryland, put it bluntly, “China Plus One proved too limited to deliver the resiliency required in today’s supply chain environment.” The pandemic only made this clearer. When China’s strict Covid lockdowns shuttered factories, from semiconductors to car parts, companies around the world found themselves stranded.

The report describes the last six years as a series of cascading shocks. First came tariffs under Donald Trump, followed by the pandemic, then the intensifying trade war with the US, Canada and the European Union, and finally the ongoing geopolitical tensions that still rattle global trade today. Each event chipped away at the stability companies once took for granted. The outcome is a new mantra: “risk hedging is the new global supply chain management.” In practice, that means China Plus X — production spread across multiple countries, not just one fallback option.



Register Now!

November 11-13, 2025
Miami Beach Convention Center
Florida, USA



tl-americas.org
aircargoamericas.com



since 1991 in Miami



The report sums it up: "Companies that once relied on one country – China – for their manufacturing output are now diversifying their portfolios. No longer are they putting their eggs in one basket."

Transportation and cost

Transportation has become the most visible pinch point. Disruptions at the Suez Canal, piracy in the Red Sea, and a drought at the Panama Canal have all sent freight rates swinging wildly. "Freight rates slumped to their lowest level in October 2023, at just US\$1,342 for a 40-foot container," the report notes. "But by July 2024, they had skyrocketed to over US\$5,900, the highest value on record." For manufacturers already under strain, such volatility only underscores the urgency of spreading risk across trade routes and geographies.

The report highlights the importance of due diligence: "When considering a country for Plus X, it is essential to study both its current and future transportation capabilities." That means looking beyond ports and shipping lanes to include internal roads, airports and rail connections. In some cases, companies are turning to creative solutions. DHL's multimodal express, for example, combines ocean freight from Asia to the US west coast with onward airfreight to Europe, cutting delays without ballooning costs. As the report explains, "It brings the best of both modes to bear – ocean for affordability, air for speed."

Cost, meanwhile, is another complex calculation. While China is no longer the cheapest labour market, moving elsewhere does not automatically guarantee savings. "In a Deloitte survey, 43 percent of respondents noted cost as the top constraint in shifting to a Plus X strategy," the report points out. The issue is not just wages, but also sourcing of raw materials, supplier availability, and the hidden costs of longer transit times and higher inventories. The report argues that companies need to see the bigger picture: "The perception that Plus X is too expensive is shortsighted. In the long term, when all variables are weighed, the short-term bump in costs may take a back seat to the longer-term benefits."

Building blocks

Beyond transport and cost, three other factors define whether a country can serve as a viable Plus X hub: infrastructure, workforce and regulatory environment. On infrastructure, the report is frank: "The countries competing to become alternatives to China lag behind

– a gap that's unsurprising given China's 35 years as the world's factory." Yet many are investing heavily to catch up. Vietnam has earmarked between US\$43 billion and US\$65 billion for transport infrastructure between 2021 and 2030, while Mexico is expanding its ports and building what is expected to become its largest air cargo hub.

Workforce dynamics are equally pivotal. China's labour force is ageing, while Plus X nations such as India and Vietnam boast younger populations ready to step in. But it's not simply about numbers. The report cautions, "In China, a factory may need 500 workers. In a Plus X country, the same output might require 1,000 workers. The analysis must assess whether the return on investment adds up." India's bid to become a semiconductor hub illustrates both the challenge and the opportunity. To succeed, the country will need an additional 300,000 skilled workers within five years.

Regulation is the final piece of the puzzle. Trade agreements, tariffs, and tax breaks can make or break a Plus X decision. Vietnam's 2020 free trade agreement with the EU eliminated 99 percent of tariffs, while Malaysia is leveraging its membership in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest trade deal. As the report writes, "Financial incentives can significantly reduce the cost of setting up new operations and help companies gain a competitive advantage."

Resilience over efficiency

Shifting production is never straightforward. Building new factories, training new workforces, and navigating unfamiliar regulations take time and money. But for many companies, the risks of standing still are far greater. "Intentional redundancy is the new face of global supply chains," the report concludes. Just as IT systems use duplication to ensure uptime, supply chains are now designing redundancy into their networks to withstand the next crisis — whether tariffs, pandemics or canal closures.

Examples abound. Samsung moved much of its production to Vietnam years ago, while Apple is steadily increasing iPhone production in India, aiming for a quarter of global output by 2028. But the broader trend is clear: the era of relying on one country is over.

Or as the report puts it: "For supply chains, migrating to smart resiliency and redundancy is not easy. But clearly worth it, as the likes of Samsung and Apple have proved."



"The countries competing to become alternatives to China lag behind."

FLYING WITH FUR AND FEATHERS

BY Edward HARDY



The transport of live animals by airfreight is one of the most complex and scrutinised segments of the global logistics industry. From thoroughbred racehorses worth millions of US dollars to domestic pets being reunited with their families, the task involves not only strict safety and welfare standards but also delicate coordination between airlines, airports, handlers, and regulators.

The stakes are exceptionally high. Animals are living cargo, and unlike pharmaceuticals or electronics, they cannot be replaced if something goes wrong. Temperature swings, delays on the tarmac, or inadequate handling procedures can have devastating consequences. As international trade in livestock, exotic pets, and zoological specimens grows, airlines face mounting pressure.

More than cargo

IATA's Centre of Excellence for Independent Validators (CEIV) Live Animals certification has become a benchmark for airlines wishing to prove their commitment to welfare standards. It requires rigorous training, documented procedures, and regular audits to ensure that every animal—from day-old chicks to big cats—arrives safely at its destination. Yet certification is only part of the story. Behind the paperwork lies a daily operational challenge: balancing commercial imperatives with the uncompromising ethical obligations.

For James Chiou, Chief Cargo Commercial Officer at Starlux Airlines, the transport of live animals is a responsibility that cannot be reduced to a line on a balance sheet. "The most important thing is that you are dealing with living, breathing beings, not boxes," he said. "That changes the way you think about every stage of the journey, from booking to delivery."

Chiou explained that certification under IATA's CEIV Live Animals programme is vital in setting a standard across carriers. But in his view, the real test comes during operations. "Having the certificate shows the world you can handle the shipments, but animals don't read certificates. What matters is how you train your people, how you prepare the aircraft, and how you work with partners on the ground," he said.

Temperature control and stress minimisation are among the key concerns. Horses, for example, often require specially designed stalls, careful loading procedures, and constant monitoring. Smaller animals may need temperature-stable containers and noise reduction measures. "Every species has its own set of requirements," Chiou noted. "You cannot treat a racehorse the same way you treat day-old chicks, and you cannot treat a pet cat the same way you treat exotic reptiles."

Such nuances make this cargo segment particularly resource-intensive. Airlines must coordinate closely with veterinarians, shippers, and regulators. They must also factor in transit times, tarmac exposure, and contingency planning in the event of delays. "If a flight is late, it

is not just about missed connections—it's about the welfare of the animals waiting in that aircraft hold," Chiou added.

Commercial logic and ethical responsibility

Despite the operational complexity, the transport of live animals can be lucrative. Specialist shipments command premium rates, especially when they involve high-value animals. Yet Chiou cautions against treating it as a purely financial exercise. "Yes, there is revenue uplift, but there is also reputational risk. One mistake can undo years of hard work in building trust with shippers and the public," he said.

Starlux has invested in multiple CEIV certifications, from pharmaceuticals to fresh produce, but Chiou emphasises that live animals carry unique responsibilities. "With semiconductors or lithium batteries, the challenge is about precision and compliance. With animals, the challenge is about empathy. Our staff are trained not just to follow SOPs but to understand that the cargo is alive and feels stress, heat, and noise," he explained.

Revenue growth in this sector is not expected to rival that of fresh or pharmaceutical shipments, but Chiou sees it as a strategic niche. "The strongest uplift comes from fresh shipments, then pharma," he acknowledged. "But live animals still play an important role because they differentiate your brand. They show shippers that you can handle complexity, and that builds confidence for other premium cargo too."

Airlines also face logistical bottlenecks at major hubs. Warehousing space, slot availability, and night operations can directly affect animal shipments. In Taipei, for instance, warehouse congestion is a concern. "We work closely with handling partners to secure priority space and equipment," Chiou said. "The airport's 24/7 operations and night-time slots are valuable because they allow us to align with Asia-US and Asia-Europe cut-off times. That means shorter transit times for animals, which is always better for welfare."

The future

Looking ahead, Starlux expect stricter scrutiny of animal welfare in transport, particularly from regulators and advocacy groups.

Chiou believes that a dual strategy—balancing bellyhold capacity with freighters—will help airlines adapt to this demand. "In the near term, bellyhold is still the backbone for us, especially on Asia-North America routes," he said. "But when we bring in new A350F freighters from 2028, that gives us the ability to selectively open routes that suit animal shipments, whether to North America, Europe, or elsewhere."

In the meantime, he sees continued pressure to refine standards across the network. "It is not enough to have good handling at your hub. You need consistency across your partner stations. That is why we run audits, align SOPs, and do joint training. Animals should receive the same standard of care in every airport they pass through," Chiou said.

16



"You are dealing with living, breathing beings, not boxes."



FROM CLICKS TO CARGO

BY Anastasiya SIMSEK

With digital marketplaces exploding across Southeast Asia, logistics providers are under pressure to move goods faster, smarter, and across increasingly complex networks. From urban hubs in Singapore to emerging export lanes in Vietnam and Thailand, airfreight is stepping in to handle growing demand for quick, reliable e-commerce logistics—and infrastructure, digitisation, and agility are all in the spotlight.

“e-commerce in Southeast Asia continues to be a key growth driver for air cargo,” Anindam Choudhury, Vice President, Commercial, TAM Group, said in its interview with Air Cargo Week. The region’s strategic location and booming digital economy are creating both opportunities and pressures for logistics providers to keep up with volumes and expectations.

What’s changed is not just volume, but the type of cargo moving and how fast it needs to go. “We’re seeing greater demand for express services, last-mile delivery integration, and efficient reverse logistics,” Anindam Choudhury explained. “Airfreight plays a pivotal role in meeting customer expectations for faster, more reliable deliveries.”

In this region, where digital adoption is high and consumer expectations are shifting, failure to keep up with the pace can mean falling behind. The growth is especially strong in countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, where e-commerce penetration is climbing sharply.

Southeast Asia is not a single market; it’s a patchwork of customs regimes, regulatory environments, and infrastructure maturity levels. Navigating that landscape adds significant complexity to any e-commerce supply chain.

TAM Group pointed out that agility is a necessity, not a nice-to-have. “Agility and adaptability are essential to support the speed, flexibility, and reliability required in the e-commerce space,” Anindam Choudhury stated. “This means streamlined cross-border solutions, digitised processes, and multimodal transport options to meet dynamic demand patterns.”

It’s a shift that’s pushing industry players to rethink how they build and scale services. What works in Singapore may not translate directly to the Philippines or Cambodia. Tailoring services to local realities, without losing sight of the bigger picture is becoming a competitive differentiator.

No longer just a warehouse game

Fast delivery may be the visible output, but behind it lies another key: information.

To manage the flow of goods, operators need to first manage the flow of data. “Digitisation is integral to e-commerce logistics,

enabling real-time tracking, inventory management, automated customs clearance, and enhanced customer experience,” said Anindam Choudhury. “By leveraging AI, data analytics, and digital platforms, logistics players can optimise routes, predict demand, and improve efficiency.”

But digital transformation is about more than just systems—it’s also about visibility. “It allows better visibility and control over the end-to-end supply chain, which is essential for managing the high velocity and volume of e-commerce shipments,” the company added.

As volumes rise and cargo types diversify, infrastructure becomes a limiting factor. Terminals, warehouses, and last-mile systems all need to evolve to handle faster turnaround and more precise handling requirements.

“Infrastructure investments and digital integration will be key to enhancing capacity, speed, and service quality,” added Choudhury. They also flagged “strategic partnerships” and “a robust regulatory framework” as essential pillars for building an ecosystem that can sustainably support the growth of e-commerce logistics in the region.

Governments in countries like Vietnam and Thailand are already investing in airfreight zones and bonded facilities, but alignment across the region remains a work in progress. There’s growing recognition that digital and physical infrastructure need to grow in sync—and fast.

What’s in the box?

While fashion, electronics, and consumer goods remain top categories in airfreight e-commerce, the company also noted a shift in the type of goods travelling across borders.

“e-commerce logistics in Southeast Asia is becoming more diverse and specialised,” Choudhury said. “We’re handling more temperature-sensitive, high-value, and oversized items that require tailored handling and documentation.”

That diversification is placing new pressures on warehouse operations and customs processes. The lines between e-commerce, pharma, perishables, and general cargo are increasingly blurring.

“Future opportunities lie in enhancing cross-border trade facilitation, expanding airfreight networks to secondary cities, and integrating digital ecosystems,” Choudhury mentioned. “Challenges include infrastructure gaps, regulatory fragmentation, and ensuring sustainability amidst rapid growth.”

With e-commerce volumes projected to continue rising through 2030, Southeast Asia’s logistics sector is facing a critical moment. Stakeholders need to invest, coordinate, and innovate to keep the wheels turning, both physically and digitally.



“By leveraging AI, data analytics and digital platforms, logistics players can optimise routes.”



SMARTER, MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

BY Edward HARDY

For dnata, investments in new and enhanced cargo infrastructure are not just about growth—they're about commitment to customer promise and industry leadership. At the heart of this drive is a clear ambition: "The vision of dnata is to be the most admired, and the mission is to deliver the promises our customers make," Guillaume Crozier, Chief Cargo Officer at dnata, explained.

These aspirations are backed by robust investments in infrastructure and people, guided by feedback loops from both customers and market trends. "We see an amazing growth that we want to cater to with service excellence," Crozier said. That ambition has led to major undertakings, including the UK Air Cargo City and the soon-to-be-commissioned facility in Amsterdam. "Delivering multiple projects, we've seen a great deal of learnings that we have used, and each time we have improved, hopefully, the level of efficiency."

The strategy is holistic, spanning facility modernisation, technological innovation, and staff development. "It takes us to be at the top level, on the facility side, the technology side, and on the people aspect, including training," he continued.

Resilience and culture

Faced with constant disruption and a rapidly evolving logistics environment, dnata's approach to future-proofing is grounded in resilience and continuous improvement. Crozier outlined a disciplined strategy loop: "We plan, we do, we check and act, and that's what we do."

This cyclical approach goes beyond static planning. "You never really deliver as planned, but you have that backbone that helps you to be resilient," Crozier explained, emphasising the need for a sticky and palatable vision across all stakeholders—from field staff to top executives.

Key to this is open communication and listening—both internally and with customers. "We put a lot of focus on communicating with our people, listening actively to our customers, to make sure that all the big projects we deliver are actually making business sense." A notable milestone exemplifying this is dnata's recent handling of one million tonnes in Dubai. "This is an amazing effort from everyone," he said, crediting cross-functional collaboration.

Looking ahead, Crozier highlighted plans for an e-commerce terminal in Dubai within the next 18 months, as well as strategic preparations for Al Maktoum International Airport by 2034. "We connect and share and learn from the network... Hence the right learning and efficiency gain that we are targeting in Amsterdam... will be, of course, injected in the Al Maktoum plan."

Harnessing technology

Efficiency at dnata isn't just about manpower—it's about smart systems. Technology and automation are cornerstones of dnata's innovation roadmap, and the results are already evident. "The goal is high pace, visibility and transparency, and high efficiency," Crozier asserted.

The "One Cargo" platform, launched in 2024, is a prime example of this philosophy in action. "That helped us actually to reach that one million tonne goal." The platform enables task-driven operations, integrating real-time data at every level—from front-line workers to management decision-making. "It starts with a data recorder, our people on the field... up to the manager who are actually using this data for insight and review."

Data strategy is not merely operational—it is product-centric. "Let's say Pharma... you want to have temperature real time. Live animals... you want to have other type of information."

Sustainability at the core

For dnata, environmental responsibility is integrated into every new facility plan. "We are targeting BREEAM certification or LEED certification," Crozier affirmed. "The Amsterdam Cargo City will be BREEAM certified. The UK has already reached that level. The dnata logistics facility in Dubai is going to be LEED certified."

This isn't just about meeting benchmarks—it's about embedding sustainability into the company's operational DNA. "We signed up for the IEnvA Program from IATA. We've been the first ground handling agent to be IEnvA certified here in the UAE and then in Europe, in Amsterdam," he adds.

Certifications and frameworks like these serve not only as a benchmark but as motivation for continuous improvement. "It's a people, process, tool balance that we are targeting, and you need to have the basics right and the processes right," Crozier states.

Regional growth

Amid global instability and fragmented supply chains, dnata's robust, flexible operational model has proven to be a competitive advantage. "It's a combination of capacity effort and capability efforts and cultural shift," Crozier stated, particularly referencing the lessons of the Covid-19 era and today's "VUCA" world—volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

Technological innovations such as drone-based inventory and airport community systems ensure that dnata's network remains agile and connected. "The one cargo platform... task-driven... gives clarity and guidance to our people so they are more efficient." By leveraging interconnected tools like a landside management system, warehouse automation, and cargo community systems, dnata enhances its decision-making at a micro level.

Crozier reflected on this transformation: "One million tonnes is an amazing milestone... but I will add that we have improved our customer satisfaction rates as well. So it's not only volume, it's also quality."

The Middle East advantage

Dubai's strategic location continues to serve as a linchpin in dnata's global strategy. "You can reach two-thirds of the population within eight hours," Crozier declared. But the advantage isn't just geographical—it's infrastructural. "Dubai has a great level of infrastructure. We see the ports, we see the airports... always with that ambition to be the most admired."

dnata is also expanding across the broader region. "We look at the new facility in Erbil... Pakistan is also a market that is very dynamic... We look at Africa as well." The company is banking on long-term investments wherever there is sustainable growth. "We will invest for a long and sustainable future wherever it makes a business sense."

18



18

60 Seconds With ...



BENNY SMETS

CEO of Ninatrans

BY Anastasiya SIMSEK

Benny Smets is Chief Executive Officer of Ninatrans, a family-owned company specialising in time-critical road transport for customers in Belgium and across Europe. With a strong focus on Road Feeder Services (RFS), Ninatrans supports major players in air cargo, pharma, and automotive logistics — offering reliable, high-security, and temperature-controlled solutions.

What was your dream job as a child?

When I was young, I always dreamed of becoming a Formula 1 driver.

I used to race in GP competitions about 10 years ago. Today, I'm very proud that we are a partner of DHL in the logistics of the sport.

What's your most memorable moment in the air cargo industry?

The most memorable moment was the very first air cargo transport we did for DHL, about 20 years ago. It marked real steps into the industry. We were still a small operation back then, running a fleet of just 15 trucks. Two decades later, we've grown far beyond that - with a fleet that's more than three times the size.

What's the most unusual thing you've ever shipped?

The most unusual thing we've ever shipped was a custom-made cake from a Belgian bakery, made specifically for Ivana Trump. We transported it from Belgium to Charles de Gaulle Airport to catch a flight to the US — all in a dedicated lorry.

What keeps you motivated in your role?

My wish is simply to continue doing this job for a very long time. I feel lucky to be part of this industry. It's not only about development or logistics - it's also about the people. The air cargo industry is a small community, and everyone I meet is genuinely nice. It's a community that I love and I'm always happy to reconnect with people around the world.

What's the most exciting place you've visited through work?

Being in this industry means we attend events all over the world, so we get to travel a lot. Every place has its own unique beauty. One that stands out for me was my first big air cargo event in 2019, in Singapore. I was amazed by the cultural differences, Marina Bay, and the whole atmosphere. But even now, when I travel, I'm always surprised by what I discover. I always try to make time to experience the country and its culture.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

The best advice I've received is to always be straight and honest with people. Every day, I look in the mirror and ask myself: Am I proud of what I'm doing? Am I proud of the way I communicate with people? Am I proud of the person I am?

How do you keep staff motivated?

It's always a challenge to keep everyone motivated, especially as we grow. But at Ninatrans, we work hard to keep the culture of a small organisation. Even though we now have branches in different countries, it's important that everyone feels connected. We do this through regular briefings, monthly newsletters, and by making sure our management team stays in close contact with all employees. My door is always open — people can always reach me. We put a lot of focus on keeping our drivers engaged, because they're the ones interacting with our customers every day. They deliver the service, and they're a key reason why we can maintain our quality.

What three things would you take to a desert island?

Coffee. My laptop - assuming there's internet, of course. Sun cream. And the right person.

Describe your job in three words.

Challenging, exciting, satisfying.

Coffee or tea?

Coffee.

Aisle seat or window?

Aisle.

Cats or dogs?

Cats.



SHIPPING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITY WE KNOW HOW

At Cathay Cargo, every shipment matters. From handling temperature-sensitive vaccines and fresh produce to caring for champion horses, our experts ensure that all our cargo arrives ready to make a difference to the world.



24/7
Customer Service



Cargo Handling
Expertise



Cargo Operator
of the Year

Visit us and discover more at **Booth L08 on Level B2,**
Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre.

29-31 October 2025

