



The ECS Group Journey

Mastering the Art of Global Cargo Management

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Executive Chairman, ECS Group



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Head of Revenue Management & Network Planning of Etihad Cargo



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Taking Flight: How Technology is Revolutionizing Air Cargo

The air cargo industry, the backbone of global trade, is undergoing a seismic shift. No longer is it enough to simply move goods from point A to point B. Today's customers demand speed, efficiency, and real-time visibility. This is where technology takes center stage, acting as the wind beneath the wings of a transformed industry.

Traditionally, air cargo relied on paper-based systems and manual processes, leading to delays, errors, and frustrated customers. Technology is now streamlining operations, from real-time shipment tracking via the Internet of Things (IoT) to route optimization powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI). These advancements translate into faster delivery times, reduced costs, and a more predictable supply chain.

The benefits extend beyond efficiency. Blockchain technology, with its secure and tamper-proof nature, is enhancing transparency and accountability throughout the cargo journey. This fosters trust between stakeholders and mitigates the risk of fraud.

Furthermore, technology is empowering the air cargo industry to adapt to the ever-growing demands of e-commerce. Automation and data analytics are crucial for handling the surge in online orders, ensuring timely deliveries and satisfied customers.

The road ahead is paved with even more innovation. As AI and machine learning become more sophisticated, we can expect even greater optimization of routes, cargo handling, and pricing. Predictive maintenance will ensure the smooth operation of aircraft, minimizing disruptions and delays.

Investing in technology is not just about chasing the latest trends; it's about ensuring the air cargo industry remains competitive and relevant in the face of a rapidly changing world. By embracing these advancements, we can create a future where air cargo soars to new heights, delivering not just goods, but growth and prosperity.

The future holds more potential than we can imagine. Happy reading.

Gemma Q. Casas
Editor-in-Chief

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Leonard Rodrigues
Head of Revenue Management &
Network Planning of Etihad Cargo

Leonard Rodrigues, Head of Revenue Management & Network Planning of Etihad Cargo, describes his incredible journey from the backrooms of airline operations to the center of air cargo logistics in the dynamic world of aviation. Leonard's story, which combines ambition, flexibility, and a love of travel, reveals the rich tapestry of events that have influenced his professional life and broadened his outlook on the exciting world of aviation.

"I wanted to work abroad," Leonard reflects, "and so I was only considering roles that allowed me to start working abroad." His journey commenced with a role at Air France KLM in Japan, marking the inception of a career devoted to unraveling the intricacies of the airline industry.

"My boss at the time moved into cargo," Leonard recalls, "and he said, 'follow me, there's many things to do.' And he was right." Embracing the challenge with open arms, he embarked on a transformative journey that would shape his trajectory for over a decade.

"Every year something is happening," Leonard remarks. "So many things were happening in Air France on the cargo side." From assisting in urgent aid deliveries after the Fukushima disaster to orchestrating war logistics during the French army's withdrawal from Afghanistan, his experiences epitomize the resilience and agility demanded by the industry.

"COVID-19 impacted everybody's life," Leonard acknowledges. "We were really on a mission to save the world, to save the company." Undeterred by adversity, he and his team at Etihad Airways mobilized swiftly, repurposing aircraft for cargo missions and reaffirming the indispensable role of air cargo in sustaining global supply chains.

"Residing in Abu Dhabi is a choice that was made with the



I used to be a huge movie buff," Leonard reminisces. "But the reality is, I don't have the amount of time needed to do the two hours anymore."

family," Leonard explains. "It's very progressive, it's very relaxed, and everybody's happy, generally." Cherishing moments of respite with his multicultural family, he celebrates the unique blend of cultures and experiences that define his personal and professional journey.

"I used to be a huge movie buff," Leonard reminisces. "But the reality is, I don't have the amount of time needed to do the two hours anymore." Yet, his recent excitement over Etihad's sponsorship of the Chennai Super Kings reignites his enthusiasm for the world of cricket, offering a glimpse into the diverse array of interests that enrich his life beyond aviation.

Stepping outside the boundaries of business and play, Leonard's travels reveal a tapestry of culinary delights and cultural diversity that satiate his desire. He talks on his travels to Cuba and Ukraine, marveling at the rich tapestry of experiences that dispel stereotypes and reveal the true essence of each place. He enjoys the warmth of human connections made in strange places and the depth of cultural interchange, whether in the colorful streets of Kiev or the eclectic beauty of Havana.

Leonard's culinary adventures reflect a vibrant mosaic of cultural influences, enriched by his wife's Japanese heritage and his own eclectic palate. "So my wife is Japanese," Leonard jests, "so I have to say everything Japanese." Yet, his culinary preferences extend far beyond Japanese cuisine, encompassing a love for Mexican and Indian flavors. "I kind of like everything," he admits with a grin.

With Monday designated as "Indian Day" in Leonard's household, the aromatic spices of Indian cuisine take center stage, much to the delight of his family. "One of them does ballet in a mall that doesn't have an amazing selection of groceries," he shares, referencing Mushriff Mall. Despite the limited options, His family frequents an Indian palace renowned for its flavorful tandoori Jingin Makani, indulging in a weekly tradition of savoring Indian delicacies.

Leonard's wise advice goes beyond words; it is a light of guidance for people just starting their careers. "I see that there is sometimes a consideration that maybe the two parts are a bit different," he observes. "But don't spend too much time imagining. Talk to people and you'll see how amazing it is."

In Leonard's journey, from the heights of aviation to the depths of cultural exploration, the essence of adventure and discovery permeates every facet of his existence.



Delta Cargo approves DoKaSch Temperature Solutions' Opticooler RKN

smart solution for more compact freight and enhances Delta Cargo's ability to provide reliable and advanced packaging options for temperature-sensitive pharmaceutical products.

Delta Cargo's global pharma network now spans 46 pharma-approved stations, with recent expansions including Chicago (ORD), Philadelphia (PHL) and Raleigh (RDU). Delta Cargo was the first U.S. passenger airline to receive IATA's Center of Excellence for Independent Validators (CEIV) Pharma Logistics Certification, and all Delta Cargo Pharma stations adhere to strict Good Distribution Practice (GDP) standards, ensuring the highest level of quality and compliance in pharmaceutical transportation.

"The integration of the Opticooler RKN into our fleet represents our ongoing commitment to serving the complex needs of the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries," said Alison Ricker, Managing Director – Global Sales and Product Development, Delta Cargo. "We continue to invest in our facilities, operations and staff, steadfastly upholding the most rigorous industry standards. Our commitment ensures customers have ample choices and world-class reliability for their pharmaceutical shipments."

Andreas Seitz, Managing Director of DoKaSch Temperature Solutions, commented on the significance of the partnership: "Our collaboration with Delta Cargo, a key player in the US market, highlights the reliability and quality of our Opticooler® RKN. This partnership not only expands our presence in the USA but also strengthens our global network."

Delta Cargo described its partnership with DoKaSch as particularly significant given the dynamics of the US pharmaceutical market, which is a major component of the global industry. The sector is witnessing substantial growth, especially in the field of biosimilars, and is marked by continuous research and development of new pharmaceutical products.

Frankfurt/Atlanta: In a significant move to further enhance its pharmaceutical logistics capabilities, Delta Cargo has announced the technical approval of DoKaSch Temperature Solutions' Opticooler® RKN.

This approval enables the Atlanta-based carrier to integrate the Opticooler® RKN onto its aircraft, offering customers an additional reliable and high-quality solution for pharmaceutical transport across its extensive global network.

Since 2020, Delta Cargo has been effectively utilizing DoKaSch's RAP container. The addition of the Opticooler® RKN provides an additional

International Cargo Logistics expands cold chain capabilities in collaboration with Freshline

London, UK: International Cargo Logistics (ICL) has expanded its temperature-controlled airfreight capabilities as part of an enhanced collaboration with FreshLinc Ltd (FreshLinc).

The two companies, already working together on sea freight container transport, are now to collaborate on final-mile delivery for UK airfreight. The FreshLinc cold chain storage facility in Spalding will double up to serve as a control point for Customs checks and clearances, further streamlining operations.

"This strengthened collaboration with



FreshLinc comes at an exciting time for ICL, following closely on the heels of the opening of our new Rotterdam office last month," said Nick Finbow, Perishables Sales Director, ICL. "This aligns with our ongoing growth plans, improving our ability to deliver high-quality logistics services from our Heathrow site for our clients in the perishables sector."

Founded in 1996, FreshLinc provides storage and logistical solutions across the UK and Europe from a network of distribution depots.

Lee Juniper, Chief Executive Officer, FreshLinc, noted, "We currently have established two control points in Spalding, one specialising in temperature-controlled goods. FreshLinc's facilities give our joint customers, such as ICL, the opportunity to clear products closer to the point of discharge, saving valuable time and allowing for fresher product entering the food chain."

TIACA to hold first event in Central Asia with Kazakhstan government's support

Miami, Florida: The International Air Cargo Association (TIACA) announced that the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with the Civil Aviation Committee and the Aviation Administration of Kazakhstan (AAK), will host and co-organize the first association event in Central Asia, which will take place June 19-21 in Astana.

The event will be themed Silk Road in the Sky – Kazakhstan Air Cargo Hub. The conference will continue TIACA's focus on topics that matter to the industry and connect attendees with new ideas to develop and build upon.

Kazakhstan is a thriving and growing economic influencer in Central Asia, possessing oil reserves as well as minerals and metals. It also has considerable agricultural potential, for both livestock and grain production as well as apples, walnuts, and other crops.

Attracting significant foreign investment in recent years as it seeks to develop its non-oil sector of its economy, focusing on the automotive industry, pharmaceuticals, processed metal products, mechanical engineering, as well as light industry, construction, and information and communications.

"We are excited to support economic growth and promote a flourishing and expanded logistics industry by working with the AAK to organize a first-class conference, which will bring together over 300 decision-makers from the local community and across the globe to network, showcase their expertise and solutions, as well as to learn and debate pressing issues



affecting the Central Asian region," said Steven Polmans, TIACA Chair. Catalin Radu, Director General of Aviation Administration of Kazakhstan, said the country welcomes the event, saying, "We are thrilled to have been chosen by TIACA to host their first event in central Asia. As a strong supporter of international collaboration and exchange, we are honored to welcome the global air cargo community to join us in Astana."

Glyn Hughes, TIACA Director General, noted, "Kazakhstan is perfectly located as a gateway between east and west and TIACA looks forward to introducing the global air cargo community to the opportunities that exist in this part of the world. Innovation, network connectivity and customer-focused solutions are critical for ongoing and sustainable success. The Central Asian event will shine a spotlight and accelerate these crucial enablers of success."



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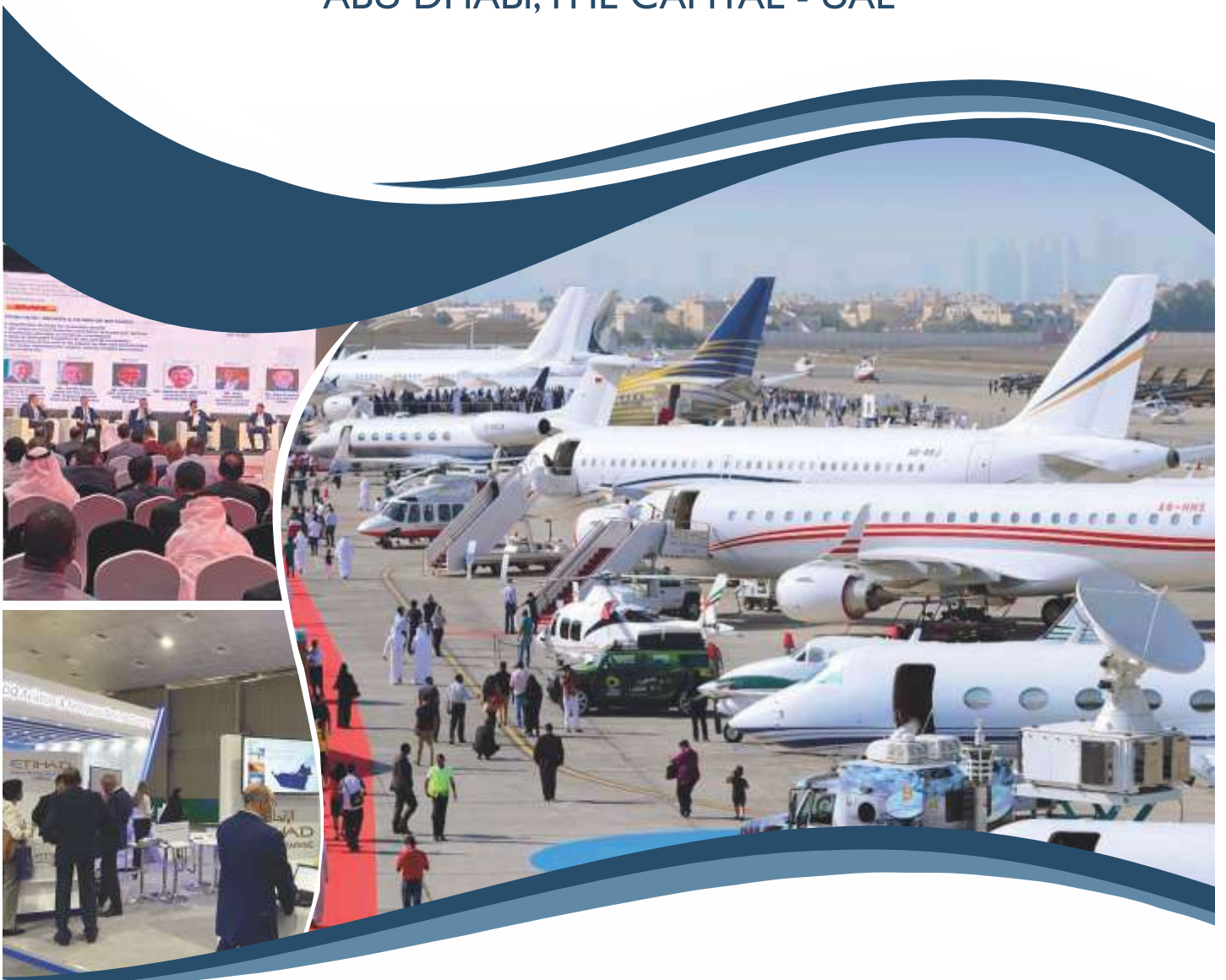


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Cargolux bans transport of disposable e-cigarettes

Luxembourg: Europe's leading all-cargo airline, Cargolux, has decided to ban the transport of disposable electronic cigarettes on all its flights, including those operated by Cargolux Italia.

This measure comes in response to growing concern about the adverse effects of these products on both public health and the environment. Disposable e-cigarettes pose a significant risk to human health, particularly for younger generations, given their targeted marketing with attractive flavors.

Additionally, these devices contain lithium batteries which, as they are not recyclable, become an environmental risk if not properly disposed of. Several countries have already imposed bans on these products in their territories.

"The ban on transporting disposable electronic cigarettes reflects Cargolux's commitment to the environment and public health and safety. With this action, we hope to contribute to reducing the availability of these products on the market. As a responsible corporate citizen, Cargolux aims for this initiative to encourage other logistics operators to adopt similar measures," said Richard Forson, President and CEO of Cargolux.



In January, Cargolux launched a new business unit, the Aquarius Aerial Firefighting (Aquarius AFF), marking a new business venture for the airline.

The aerial firefighting unit will operate a fleet of 12 Air Tractor AT-802F Fire Boss aircraft which will be acquired over three years. The first three aircraft have already been delivered and are ready for deployment by May 2024.

Through its entrance into this activity, Aquarius AFF will alleviate some of the capacity shortfall for aerial firefighting in Europe and further afield.

Extreme weather patterns, global warming and their consequences, such as wildfires, are an increasing issue for global communities. Aquarius AFF aims to assist in the fight against devastating wildfires that threaten human lives, and natural resources and significantly contribute to global CO2 emissions.

Committed to sustainable practices, Cargolux continues to set the highest standards in its business

Riyadh, KSA: Leading global logistics and transportation company Aramex is strengthening its presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the inauguration of a new regional office in Riyadh, further reinforcing the company's commitment to accelerating the transformation of the country's logistics sector under the Kingdom's Vision 2030 plan.

The opening of the new regional office will not only significantly enhance Aramex's capabilities to serve new and existing businesses across the region, but also boost the Kingdom's logistics infrastructure and contribute to the Vision 2030 goal of establishing Saudi Arabia as a global logistics hub.

In addition, the new regional headquarters and Aramex's commitment to innovation will benefit the Saudi logistics sector and contribute to Vision 2030's emphasis on digital capacity building and advancement.

"We are delighted to inaugurate our brand new regional headquarters in Riyadh and lead a bold new chapter in supporting the dynamic transformation taking place across the logistics and infrastructure segment across Saudi Arabia. These shining premises not only embody the spirit and ambition of Aramex in helping clients in Saudi Arabia and around the world make their businesses more agile, productive and efficient but will also play a crucial role in unlocking fabulous new opportunities as businesses across the Kingdom soar to a new height, backed by the conducive business environment of the Kingdom," said Othman Aljeda, CEO of Aramex.

Aramex bolsters commitment to Saudi Arabia with new regional headquarters in Riyadh



Aramex has worked side-by-side with government and enterprise sectors in the Kingdom for several decades, and its new regional headquarters would provide the perfect launchpad for developing exciting new projects with significant benefit to the Saudi economy, while enabling investment in talent development and shaping the skills needed to support the Kingdom's Vision 2030 development agenda.

Samer Marei, VP - Regional Headquarter at Aramex, commented: "With this inauguration, Aramex is proud to take the lead in bringing state-of-the-art logistics solutions, advanced technology and superior customer service to support our clients across the Kingdom and beyond, underscoring Aramex's commitment in propelling Saudi Arabia's logistics sector towards Vision 2030 goals."

First announced in February 2021, the Regional Headquarters in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia initiative aims to attract multinational companies to set up their headquarters in the Kingdom and position it as the leading commercial, industrial and investment hub for the MENA region, offering a range of benefits and premium support services. The program is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Investment (MISA) and the Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC).



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Qatar Airways Cargo retires its last Queen of the Skies

Doha, Qatar: Qatar Airways Cargo's Boeing 747F, registration A7-BGB, landed for the last time in commercial cargo service for QR Cargo as the airline fast-tracks its focus on greener flying. Arriving from Barcelona, Flight QR8807 touched down in Doha at 15:00 local time on Friday, 01 March 2024.

A7-BGB joined the Qatar Airways Cargo fleet on 26 September 2017. Over the past seven years, the two iconic freighter aircraft were deployed on more than 9,000 flights totaling over 66,000 block hours and together transporting almost 800,000 tons.

Throughout its service, the 747 aircraft served the most Incheon in South Korea with 1,165 flights. Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Guangzhou were also among the top 10 destinations the cargo aircraft served.

From racing cars (30 can fit on a 747F) to thoroughbred race horses (up to 90 horses can be carried in one flight), Qatar Airways Cargo's Boeing 747 freighters provide reliable, safe transport for many international customers. It was also a stalwart of the pandemic, carrying PPE and other medical equipment across the world, at a time when much of the world's aircraft were grounded.

Mark Drusch, Chief Officer Cargo at Qatar Airways Cargo, commented: "When we



welcomed our Boeing 747 freighters to the Qatar Airways Cargo fleet seven years ago, we were responding to a sharp rise in customer demand for capacity, which we were quickly able to fulfill. Our Next Generation freighter strategy is based both on evolving customer expectations and our firm commitment to sustainability and efficiency."

"Efficiency is achieved through fleet harmonization and simplification, and sustainability is improved by the latest in-flight and fuel technology. For these important factors, Qatar Airways Cargo is the launch customer for Boeing's next-generation 777-8F freighter, the most fuel-efficient, lowest carbon footprint freighter in the cargo industry. We are committed to the most modern and cleanest freighter fleet in the industry," he added.

Qatar Airways Cargo has a firm order for 34 Boeing 777-8F's, with options for 16 more, to augment its fleet of 27 Boeing 777 Freighters (with the 28th 777F joining the fleet in mid-March). Featuring advanced technology systems, airframes and engines, the 777-8 Freighter will be the most efficient, largest long-range and most capable twin-engine widebody freighter in the industry. The 777-8F will reduce fuel use and CO2 emissions by 30% compared to the 747-8.

United by shared values of innovation and collaboration, CHAMP joins Airbus' OpenCargoLab

Luxembourg: CHAMP, a pioneer in global innovation and collaboration in the air cargo industry, has joined Airbus' OpenCargoLab, aimed at ensuring that its open and integrated systems can offer enhanced connectivity and visibility in the sector.

Airbus' OpenCargoLab is also inviting other air cargo businesses to participate in a working group that actively explores the issues faced by the community and develops purpose-built solutions. Discussions in the working group revealed a lack of visibility and communication around the status of cargo on board – the demand for which has been made clear in the OpenCargoLab.

By actively participating in this initiative, CHAMP says it is ensuring that the industry-leading software solutions can easily integrate with the new generation of cargo aircraft and offer enhanced connectivity and dynamic communication beyond the warehouse and with third parties.

"The OpenCargoLab is an initiative we are extremely proud of, and it has been fantastic to



Pictured from left to right are: Lucas Fernandez, CHAMP VP of Innovation and Insights, Chris McDermott, CHAMP CEO, Marvin Ehrmann, Head of Airbus' OpenCargoLab, and Stephane Noll, CHAMP Head of Engagement and Transformation. CHAMP Photo

have CHAMP on board as such an enthusiastic and innovative collaborator. This is a powerful thought-leading platform, and we look forward to co-creating solutions for the air cargo industry," said Marvin Ehrmann, Head of Airbus' OpenCargoLab.

Lucas Fernandez, VP of Innovation and Insights, from CHAMP, said, "We are extremely honored to be chosen by Airbus to be selected to collaborate and proactively meet the needs of our community, and that's exactly what the OpenCargoLab facilitates."

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Saudia Cargo Launches Shenzhen Operation to Drive E-Commerce Logistics

Shenzhen, China: Saudia Cargo, a leading provider of air cargo services, announces its expansion into Shenzhen, China, with the introduction of two weekly flights which began on March 15th. This strategic move signifies Saudia Cargo's commitment to enhancing its presence in one of the most pivotal markets, underlining the importance of expansion and growth in China.

As a key player in the global logistics industry, Saudia Cargo recognizes the significance of China as a crucial market for its operations. The two weekly flights will operate every Monday and Friday, offering consistent and reliable service to meet the needs of customers in Shenzhen and beyond. This expansion enables Saudia Cargo to facilitate the seamless transportation of goods between Shenzhen and Riyadh, with Riyadh being identified as the most lucrative international market for Chinese

businesses.

Saudia Cargo's commitment to serving the booming e-commerce domain is exemplified by the company's strategic

collaboration with major Chinese players, including Cainiao, the

logistics arm of Alibaba. As Cainiao's largest partner in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Saudia Cargo plays a vital role in supplying both domestic and global e-commerce markets. Saudia Cargo's expansion into Shenzhen represents a strategic move to continue meeting the growing demand in e-commerce and capitalize on the Far East's unprecedented network growth. With China firmly established as one of Saudi Arabia's primary trading partners, the operations in Shenzhen will further strengthen trade ties between the two nations.



American Airlines cargo ships record number of Nishikigoi, Japan's 'living works of art'

FORT WORTH, Texas: American Airlines Cargo says it's moving record numbers of decorative koi carp, known as Nishikigoi, from Japan to destinations around the globe. The most beautiful of the specimens can grow to more than 100 cm in length and are valued at \$2 million each.

These ancient and long-living ornamental fish are highly prized by collectors, and their curated environments often serve as an element of artistic design.

The Nishikigoi is the national fish of Japan. Because of its beauty and elegance, it is considered a sign of great wealth and a source of pride in many cultures. The fish require special handling and care when traveling by air as they are transported from native Japan to aqua culturists who import koi for collectors. The most popular features on the fish are markings of two or three colors including white, scarlet and ink black.

American Airlines Cargo has been transporting koi in increasing volumes for 20 years. Their popularity has grown as ornamental fishkeeping expands globally, particularly in Hong Kong, the US, China, Germany, the Netherlands and Indonesia, which accounts for some 60% of their export value.

Approximately 55% of koi breeders are in



Niigata Prefecture, 250km north of Tokyo, with most of American's export business of koi coming from this region.

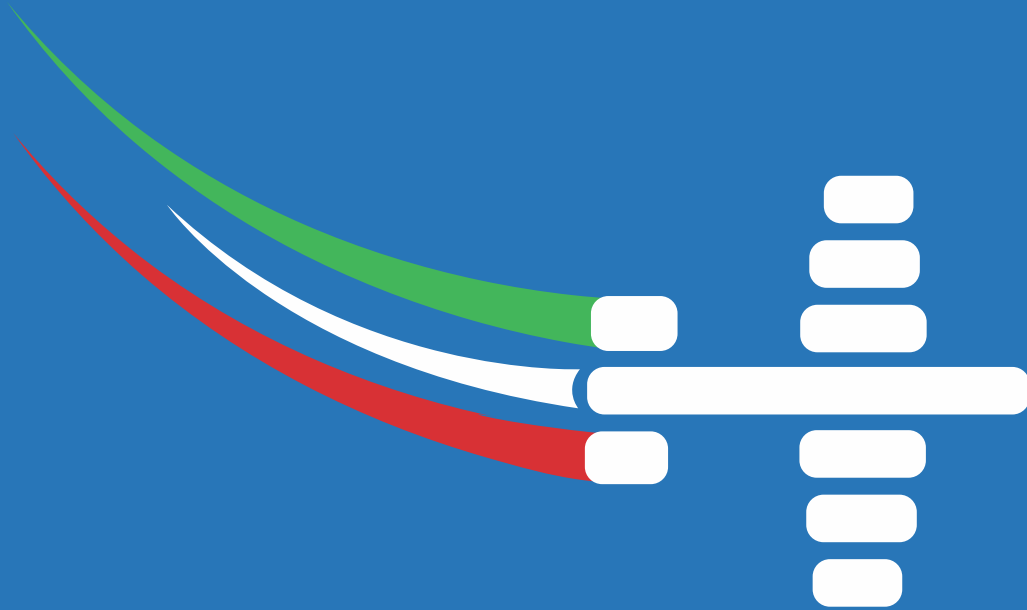
In 2023, the American Airlines Cargo team in Japan transported koi in record volumes of more than 19,100kgs to LAX and 9,600kgs to DFW alone.

"These living works of art are beautiful creatures and require highly specialized knowledge and training to ship them. Our dedicated team under Keisuke Morita are true experts in their field," says Emma Oliver, Director Cargo Sales Europe, Africa & Middle East (EMEA) and Asia Pacific (APAC). "The transportation of the Nishikigoi must be on direct flights due to their sensitivity, with great precautions taken to tailor their travel accommodations to their oxygen needs. I am proud of our teams that are trained to handle these shipments with the utmost care and expertise."

American currently operates two direct flights daily to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) from either Haneda Airport (HND) or Tokyo-Narita International Airport (NRT). As a member of United for Wildlife's Transport Taskforce, American is dedicated to ending the illegal trafficking of wildlife. American signed the Buckingham Palace Declaration in December 2022, making it the first US airline and cargo carrier to join the organization.

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Challenge Group launches scheduled 2x a week service to Mumbai

Malta: Challenge Group has decided to utilize the added capacity of its second converted B767 freighter by establishing twice-a-week scheduled flights between Mumbai (BOM) and Liège (LGG).

The new scheduled flight between Mumbai and Liège creates a direct link between strong economic geographies with operations serving the whole of Europe and the US. Offering a payload of 52 tons per uplift, the freighter will mainly carry pharmaceuticals and electronics, but also the large and complex main deck cargo shipments that are Challenge Group's expertise.

"Given that India is striving to become the factory of the world, and the production of key verticals has significantly increased during the past few years, our strategic decision to now launch a regular and direct India-Europe service goes some way towards satisfying the intense customer demand on this route," said Or Zak, Chief Commercial Officer of Challenge Group. "In fact, after the inaugural flight, we are already adding a second weekly frequency from April onwards."

"The launch of our Mumbai freighter service is the result of extensive market preparation



conducted over the past year. This initiative commenced with consistent charter operations across various airports such as DEL, HYD, and BLR. Subsequently, we conducted a targeted roadshow in BOM and DEL last June, engaging with key stakeholders in the logistics industry to present our assets, capabilities, expertise, our supply chain approach and the value proposition of our end-to-end solution.

"This endeavor provided more insights into their business requirements. Our participation in the recent Air Cargo India event in February further solidified our presence and network within the sector, paving the way for the successful introduction of our Mumbai freighter service," Or Zak further explains.

Challenge Group's Indian cargo capacity which is offered for bookings to the entire Indian freight forwarding community, is managed by the group's entrepreneurial and reliable GSSA partner, Rainbow Aviation.

In allocating the additional capacity of its second converted B767 freighter to operate in this new market, the Group aims to significantly enhance customer service and advance its global presence

Mini freighters are the answer for NEO automotive charters

Frankfurt, Germany: Frankfurt-based trade-only charter specialist NEO has completed a program of 20 air cargo charters from Spain and Portugal to the UK, carrying urgent automotive components.

The flights operated from Spain and Portugal to Birmingham and Liverpool UK using Metro, Saab 340, ATR42 and ATR72 freighter aircraft with capacities ranging from 2.1 to 9.2 tonnes. The palletised loads comprised from 1 to 25 packages per flight, each item measuring 120cm x 80cm x 120cm, and weighing 360 kilos.

All shipments were extremely urgent and were needed to maintain car production lines. Flights were typically booked at a few hours' notice, with departures and arrivals



always required on the same day.

Ismail Duran, Time Critical Sales Manager of NEO, explained: "This was a challenging period in which ongoing temporary supply issues led to sporadic and unpredictable component needs. The only common denominator was the extreme urgency of the shipments, to avoid production line shut-downs.

"Sourcing suitable, available nearby aircraft and operating them at such short notice, while also minimizing the costs to the client, created a few challenges – but nothing we couldn't solve. Smaller freighters provided the solution. It all went to plan, and the end customer was able to maintain production throughout with minimal disruption and at a sensible cost."



Amadou Diallo
CEO, DHL Global Forwarding
Middle East & Africa

DHL Connectedness Report 2024: UAE is among the world's top 10 most connected countries

and information flows, MENA ranks second on trade, reflecting the importance of the oil trade, the rising prominence of the Gulf countries in trade networks more generally, and the close ties many North African countries have to Europe.

DHL's Global Connectedness Report draws on nearly 9 million data points and provides a unique and comprehensive picture of how goods and services, capital, information, and people are moving around the world.

This year, for the first time, the report used a methodology that measures the world's depth of globalization on a scale from 0% (nothing crosses national borders at all) to 100% (a "frictionless" world where borders and distance have ceased to matter). It currently stands at 25%, which means a fully globalized world is still far from a reality.

The findings also suggest that despite global economic headwinds and political turmoil, global flows have proven highly resilient, growing faster than domestic activity and stretching out across greater distances. As such, there continue to be many avenues for countries to participate in international business. The Middle East region, including the UAE, has seized this opportunity and accelerated its digital connectedness to facilitate international trade and flows of capital, information, and talent.

"Despite the economic turbulence over the past few years, DHL's Global Connectedness report shows that globalization reached a record high in 2022 and remained close to that level in 2023. Companies expanded their international presence and earned more sales abroad. More specifically, the UAE has invested in expanding the scope of its connectivity by harnessing technology and introducing national-level policies that facilitate global trade and exchange and attract the right talent pool," said Amadou Diallo, CEO of DHL Global Forwarding Middle East & Africa.

The report also highlights a healthy appetite for international expansion, with a rise in the value of announced greenfield foreign direct investment (FDI) and publicly traded companies from most countries earning more of their sales abroad. People flow, which was hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, continued a strong recovery trend in 2023.

International travel globally reached 88% of pre-pandemic levels and was on track for a full recovery by the end of 2024. The Middle East was leading the travel recovery, with international arrivals already 23% above pre-pandemic levels in 2023, according to data from the UN World Tourism Organization.

Dubai, UAE: The UAE has surged ahead in 'DHL's Global Connectedness Report to occupy the No. 8 spot among the world's top 10 most globalized countries. It has also registered the maximum increase in performance since 2001, securing the top spot for rising connectedness among 181 countries analyzed.

According to the report, the MENA region remains well-connected to much of the rest of the world, not only through trade but also investment, immigration, and tourism.

Even as Europe leads on trade and people flows, and North America leads on capital

Munich Airport is the only German airport to record growth in freight transportation

Munich, Germany: Data from the German Airports Association (ADV) shows Munich Airport was the only major German airport to record growth in freight transportation in 2023 with a volume of 284,000 tons, a year-on-year increase of 6.6%, while the total volume in Germany fell by 7.1%.

A significant share of this increase is attributable to belly cargo, i.e., goods transported in the cargo hold of passenger aircraft, which grew by as much as 11% at Munich Airport. The direct connections to China, which were resumed in the middle of last year, the new route to Bangalore in southern India, and the four weekly flights to Taipei have also been very well received, especially by the healthy Bavarian export industry.



Freight volumes continue to soar in 2024: Compared with the same month of the previous year, freight volume increased by 6.5% in January and 10.8% in February. Overall, the volume of freight at Munich Airport is now back to almost 90% of the pre-pandemic level.

The availability of freight capacity will continue to increase this year. New routes to Seattle, Vietnam, and Johannesburg as well as additional flights on the schedule – including to Beijing and Osaka – offer industrial and logistics companies in the service area of Munich Airport additional opportunities to transport cargo directly via Munich.

Eni, Fincantieri and RINA establish partnership for maritime transport decarbonization

Rome, Italy: Eni, a global energy company, Fincantieri, one of the world's largest shipbuilding groups and the only one active in all high-tech marine industry sectors, and RINA, a multinational inspection, certification, and engineering consultancy, have signed an agreement to develop joint initiatives for energy transition in the industry.

The partnership formalizes their commitment to develop joint projects, in line with the partners' strategies, to decarbonize the maritime sector in the medium to long term with the goal of Net Zero by 2050. Additionally, the establishment of a permanent global observatory regarding future technological, regulatory, and market developments will be evaluated.

The three companies agreed to conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the most sustainable alternatives to support the maritime decarbonization pathway. This will also be based on the development of complementary solutions to fuels already available for other hard-to-abate sectors.

The partnership's areas of interest also include an analysis of the reference energy infrastructure and the development of new logistic structures, including the



Pictured from left to right are: Carlo Luzzatto, CEO and General Manager of RINA; Pierroberto Folgiero, CEO and Managing Director of Fincantieri; Giuseppe Ricci, Chief Operating Office for Energy Evolution at Eni. Supplied Photo

investments that the sector requires.

Giuseppe Ricci, Chief Operating Officer for Energy Evolution at Eni, commented: "The collaboration with Fincantieri and RINA, two major Italian players, is a further step in our journey towards the transition and decarbonization of maritime transport. To meet the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda, it is important not only to manage what is immediate but also to act with a medium to long-term perspective, developing partnerships to create more sustainable solutions and products."

Pierroberto Folgiero, CEO and Managing Director of Fincantieri, said: "We are highly committed to supporting our clients in addressing the industrial challenges of the maritime energy transition, and this initiative is aimed at initially creating a hub of study to harness Italy's extraordinary expertise in new technologies, novel fuels, and their profound industrial implications for the ship system."

Carlo Luzzatto, CEO and General Manager of RINA, said collaboration brings opportunities that would yield positive results, saying, "Together, we have the opportunity to share knowledge and experience and to contribute to more sustainable solutions that support the shipping supply chain. RINA brings to the partnership its engineering and technological skills, developed across various sectors, to support shipping in its journey towards reducing its carbon footprint, without excluding any energy options."

Data expert Rotate forecasts Puerto Rico to see 24% YoY growth over the next 3 years

San Juan, Puerto Rico: The Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community, working with Rotate, developers of the Community's data dashboard, is predicting year-on-year growth of 24 percent in life sciences exports over the next three years.

The Community's temperature-controlled exports are predicted to increase annually by 30 percent for the next three years, with a further 14 percent annual increase predicted in the export of medical devices.

The statistics are drawn from a report by Boston Consulting Group and from the Community's data dashboard, which aggregates data sources such as air cargo imports and exports, and air trade demand between Puerto Rico and the U.S.

Rotate is an air cargo consulting, data, and software specialist, and has worked with the

From left to right: Jonas van Stekelenburg, Advisor, DDEC, Francisco Garcia, Advisor, DDEC, Tom Vincent, VP, Prime Air Corp, Iris Vincent, President, Prime Air Corp, Secretary General Manuel Cidre, DDEC, Ryan Keyrouse, Co-Founder and CEO, Rotate, Cesar Castillo, President and CEO, Cesar Castillo LLC, Varlín Vissepó, Chief Legal Officer, Aerostar Airport Holdings. Supplied Photo



Community to provide its members with valuable insights into the Puerto Rican air cargo market.

"Since its inception in 2023, the Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community has been driving quality, spearheading training initiatives, and hosting conferences, such as our Community Meeting, to foster collaboration between members," said Jonas van Stekelenburg, Advisor, Departamento de Desarrollo Económico y Comercio (DDEC).

"These findings are a testament to the Community's progress, the tremendous work and dedication of its members, and a true indication of the potential for growth throughout our pharma operations."

Rotate presented its findings during a presentation at the Community's meeting in February, which was held at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) with delegates from over 40 companies.



The ECS Group Journey: Mastering the Art of Global Cargo Management

“Our focus is on developing new services and solutions tailored to the evolving needs of airlines. By constantly seeking revenue optimization opportunities, we aim to exceed our partners' expectations and ensure their satisfaction.”

Adrien Thominet
Executive Chairman, ECS Group

By **Mohammed Irshad**

The world of global cargo management can be a labyrinth, where maintaining consistent service and operational standards across regions is a high-stakes juggling act. Yet, as a leading General Sales & Service Agent (GSSA), ECS Group, under the astute leadership of Executive Chairman and CEO Adrien Thominet, has mastered this art with finesse. Their vast network of 181 offices in 59 countries worldwide isn't just about consistency; it's about pushing the boundaries of innovation in the industry.

In an exclusive interview with **Air Cargo Update**, Adrien Thominet, ECS Group's Executive Chairman, elucidates their operational ethos, characterized by an unyielding dedication to service excellence. Moreover, he unveils their pioneering endeavors that are not only reshaping but also redefining the trajectory of global cargo management.

Ensuring Consistency Across Regions

Thominet emphasizes ECS Group's centralized approach to standardization, facilitated by regional headquarters and robust digital tools. "We strive to centralize operations and duplicate standards established at headquarters across all regions," states Thominet. "Our systems, processes, and digital tools enable seamless replication of standards worldwide, ensuring consistency in service delivery."

The Group's dedication to service excellence extends beyond standardization. Thominet highlights ECS Group's commitment to continuous improvement, driven by the imperative to optimize revenue for airline partners. "Our focus is on developing new services and solutions tailored to the evolving needs of airlines," affirms Thominet. "By constantly seeking revenue optimization opportunities, we aim to exceed our partners' expectations and ensure their satisfaction."

Pioneering Total Cargo Management (TCM)

Thominet sheds light on ECS Group's pioneering TCM offering, which revolutionizes traditional cargo management methods. "TCM entails assuming full responsibility for both sales and operations, including audit, quality, and safety aspects," he explains. "By adopting this all-inclusive approach, we transcend the role of a traditional GSA, assuming the responsibilities of



an airline and offering a comprehensive solution to our partners."

The innovative nature of TCM lies in its ability to address specific pain points in the industry. He elaborates, "TCM not only streamlines operations but also enhances accountability and efficiency. By managing claims, operations, billing, and interlining, we provide a holistic solution that delivers tangible benefits to our airline partners."

Driving Innovation and Value-added Services

ECS Group's commitment to innovation extends beyond TCM, encompassing delivering value-added services and digital solutions. Thominet underscores the company's efforts to differentiate itself and create added value for its partners. "We continuously seek opportunities to provide innovative solutions that optimize revenue and enhance operational efficiency," he asserts. "From digital platforms to interlining options, our goal is to empower our airline partners with tools and services that drive revenue optimization."

As ECS Group grows and innovates globally, Thominet stays focused on understanding its clients' changing needs, reaffirming their dedication to excellence and driving innovation across its global operations. "As a trusted partner to airlines worldwide, we remain committed to delivering value, driving innovation, and exceeding expectations," states Thominet. "Our relentless pursuit of excellence ensures that we remain at the forefront of the industry, driving positive change and delivering tangible benefits to our partners."

Expanding Footprint in Africa

With the recent acquisition of EFIS Morocco, ECS Group embarks on an ambitious journey to deepen its footprint in Africa. Thominet sheds



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light on the company's strategic approach to integration and expansion in a region ripe with opportunities and challenges.

Thominet elucidates ECS Group's strategic move into Africa, emphasizing the region's significance as a new frontier for development. "Africa is the new area of interest for us to explore and develop. We already have a presence in Nigeria, and the acquisition of EFIS Morocco marks a significant step forward in expanding our reach on the continent," he said.

Recognizing the predominance of manual logistics processes in African markets, Thominet highlights ECS Group's value proposition. "There is ample room for a multi-international company like us to bring our expertise to Africa," he explains. "Our financial stability, streamlined processes, robust IT systems, and adherence to compliance standards set us apart. We aim to offer airlines in Africa the same level of service and commitment they experience in other continents."

Adapting to Digitalization

As the industry witnesses a paradigm shift towards digitalization and e-commerce, ECS Group is at the forefront of innovation. Thominet discusses the company's strategic initiatives in response to the increasing adoption of online booking portals in air cargo. "We've taken significant steps to adapt to this evolving landscape," he reveals. "We've established Mail & More, a dedicated GSS solution for e-commerce and mail traffic management. Additionally, our partnership with Cargo AI has enabled us to invest in digital platforms, facilitating a seamless transition towards digitalization."

ECS Group continues to be a leader in the digital world, looking for ways to incorporate automation and artificial intelligence (AI) into its daily operations. Thominet acknowledges the nascent stage of AI implementation but underscores its potential in enhancing predictive capabilities and optimizing operations. "AI holds the promise of revolutionizing our industry, and we are committed to harnessing its power to drive efficiency and elevate customer experiences," says Thominet.

Thominet reflects on the varying degrees of digital maturity across regions, noting Europe and the Middle East as frontrunners in embracing online business. "Surprisingly, Europe has emerged as a leader in this regard, followed closely by the Middle East," he observes. "While Asia and the USA are catching up, there's still progress to be made in terms of digital adoption."

Impact of COVID-19 on Industry Dynamics

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the industry's digital

transformation, prompting a shift towards remote work and digital solutions. Thominet reflects on the pandemic's role in catalyzing change within the industry. "The COVID-19 period forced us to reevaluate our operations and embrace digital solutions," he acknowledges. "It catalyzed change, pushing both the new and old generations to adapt to digital transformation."

Thominet expresses confidence in the industry's readiness to embrace change, particularly driven by the influx of the new generation. "The new generation is inherently more inclined towards embracing digitalization," he asserts. "As industry leaders, it's our responsibility to facilitate this transition and capitalize on the opportunities it presents."

Diversification as a Shield Against Risk

Thominet emphasizes the importance of diversifying revenue streams as a safeguard against potential risks. With a keen eye on market dynamics and bolstered by robust business intelligence, ECS Group identifies and seizes opportunities swiftly. "Our close proximity to market opportunities and vigilance in monitoring market trends enable us to preempt risks and capitalize on emerging prospects," notes Thominet.

ECS Group's proactive stance towards revenue diversification is evident in its exploration of new freight solutions. He elaborates, "We see opportunities to implement new freight solutions, such as joint ventures with airline partners, which not only mitigates risk but also allows us to capitalize on emerging market trends."

Middle East and Beyond: A Nexus of Growth

Acknowledging the transformative shifts in the Middle East, Thominet highlights ECS Group's proactive stance in the region. With a formidable presence in Dubai, the company is poised to harness the region's burgeoning aviation and healthcare sectors. "The Middle East presents a dynamic landscape, fueled by both regional advancements and global influences. It's an area of immense potential for us," Thominet noted.

ECS Group's active engagement in the Middle East extends beyond traditional logistics to capitalize on the region's diverse opportunities. Thominet elaborates on the company's strategic initiatives, stating, "Our presence in Dubai serves as a strategic gateway, allowing us to tap into the region's thriving aviation and healthcare industries. We are actively exploring collaborations and partnerships to expand our footprint and enhance our service offerings."



The recent geopolitical challenges, particularly the Red Sea crisis, have underscored the region's strategic importance in global logistics. Thominet acknowledges the impact of these challenges while emphasizing ECS Group's resilience and adaptability. "Despite the geopolitical complexities, the Middle East remains a key focus area for us. We are committed to navigating these challenges while capitalizing on the region's vast potential," he asserts.

Furthermore, Thominet highlights the region's pivotal role in driving technological innovation, particularly in the adoption of digital solutions. "The Middle East is at the forefront of digital transformation, with a strong emphasis on innovation and technology adoption. We see tremendous opportunities to leverage digital solutions to enhance efficiency and customer experiences in the region," he adds.

Thominet discusses the synergies between the Middle East and the booming Indian market. "India's booming economic growth and increasing trade volumes make it a significant market for ECS Group," he states. "The combination of the Middle East's strategic location and India's economic dynamism creates a compelling opportunity for us to expand our presence and deliver value to our customers."

ECS Group's strategic investments in both the Middle East and India reflect its commitment to capitalizing on emerging market opportunities and driving sustainable growth. Thominet concludes, "As these regions continue to evolve, ECS Group remains dedicated to fostering strategic partnerships, embracing innovation, and delivering unparalleled service to our global clientele."

Beyond Borders: Charting Growth Trajectories

Geographical expansion is just one facet of ECS Group's growth strategy. Thominet emphasizes the importance of diversification in services, offering comprehensive solutions beyond sales and operations. "Our focus is on total cargo management, providing end-to-end solutions that empower airlines to streamline their operations," explains Thominet.

As ECS Group continues to evolve, Thominet underscores the company's commitment to continuous innovation. "We aim to provide a comprehensive suite of services, encompassing ground supervision and outsourcing, to meet the evolving needs of our clientele," he adds.

Advice for Industry Pioneers

Reflecting on ECS Group's journey, Thominet underscores the importance of reliability, innovation, and adaptability. "In this dynamic industry, aligning with trusted partners and embracing innovation is paramount," advises Thominet. He emphasizes the significance of continuous reinvention, urging industry players to remain agile and proactive in navigating the winds of change.

In his concluding remarks, Thominet takes a forward-looking stance, emphasizing ECS Group's resolute dedication to advancing industry innovation and influencing the course of international logistics.



Flying Fresh: Handling the World's Perishable Goods Trade

By Mohammed Irshad

The delivery of perishable commodities is one of the industries that perform a delicate pirouette in the relentless rhythm of global trade. Imagine crates of glistening cherries, hand-picked at the peak of freshness in Chile, arriving crisp and juicy in China days later. Or think of a prized Arabian stallion, carefully crafted and flown across continents to participate in a prestigious competition. The intricate web of logistics and infrastructure that underpins the movement of these time-sensitive treasures is nothing short of awe-inspiring. It's a symphony of meticulous planning, specialized handling, and rapid transit, all working in concert to ensure these perishables reach their destinations with their integrity and value intact.

Amidst this complex ecosystem, two key players stand out for their expertise and innovation: Challenge Group and Changi Airport. By delving into their insights and capabilities, we can gain a deeper understanding of the nuances and challenges that define the fascinating world of global perishable trade. We'll explore the strategies employed by these leaders to navigate temperature-controlled environments, streamlined customs clearances, and the ever-evolving demands of this dynamic sector. Through their lens, we'll gain a richer appreciation for the invisible ballet that keeps the world's most delicate and delicious cargo moving seamlessly across the globe.

How Challenge Group Masters Perishable Logistics

David Canavan, Chief Operating Officer at Challenge Group, paints a vivid picture of their operations, which are finely tuned to transporting perishable goods. "At Challenge Group, we've built our network and our infrastructure around the transportation of perishables," Canavan asserts confidently. "This specialization has endowed us with a maturity in this area, allowing us to navigate it with relative ease," he says.

He underscores the company's robust capabilities, citing its capital capacity, operational prowess, and specialized expertise in the pharma segment. "We are well-equipped to handle the challenges inherent in transporting perishable goods," Canavan remarks.

Canavan paints a vivid picture of Challenge Group's diverse operations, highlighting their ability to maintain a delicate balance in transporting perishable goods worldwide. "Whether it's inbound or outbound, our operations are remarkably balanced," he explains. "From flowers in Liège to lobster from Canada, we ensure that perishable goods reach their destinations swiftly and efficiently." From transporting delicate flowers from Liège to Amsterdam to facilitating the movement of seafood from Norway to Asia, Challenge Group's portfolio is as diverse as it is extensive.

Adapting to Changing Consumer Trends

Canavan acknowledges the shifting landscape brought about by the rise of e-commerce, which has altered consumer



David Canavan
Chief Operating Officer
Challenge Group



Jaisey Yip
Vice President of Cargo Business
Division at Changi Airport Group

"Whether it's through introducing new destinations or increasing frequencies to existing ones, we are committed to sustaining growth in the coming years."

Canavan also discusses the company's outlook for the future, noting potential expansion into South American markets to capitalize on emerging opportunities. By tapping into new markets and continuously improving their capabilities, Challenge Group aims to remain at the forefront of the perishable trade industry.

Investing in Innovation and Technology

While there's a constant need to explore new destinations and

behavior and increased demand for perishable products. Reflecting on the impact of e-commerce on perishable markets, Canavan acknowledges the notable shift in consumer behavior, particularly during the pandemic. "We've witnessed a significant change in consumer demand for perishable products," he observes. "From seafood to fruit, there's been a surge in demand, driven in part by the rise of e-commerce."

Canavan addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by the exponential growth of e-commerce. "The growth of e-commerce has been staggering, making it difficult to gauge the exact percentage growth of perishable markets," he notes. "However, it's evident that perishable trade is moving in the right direction, albeit with its own set of challenges."

However, he emphasizes that while e-commerce plays a significant role, the final mile delivery is often handled by traditional retail or wholesale organizations. Challenge Group's focus remains on providing speed, reliability, and security throughout the supply chain, ensuring that perishable goods reach their destination in pristine condition.

Predicted Growth

In terms of growth, Canavan acknowledges the exponential rise of e-commerce but highlights the steady nature of perishable markets. Canavan shares insights into the company's predicted growth. "While our growth has been steady, we are exploring avenues for further expansion," he explains.

increase frequencies to meet growing demand, Challenge Group remains committed to leveraging technology to enhance safety and efficiency. "We are investing in technology to enhance the safety and efficiency of our transportation processes," he reveals. "From end-to-end solutions to track-and-trace systems, technology remains integral to our operations."

He continues, "For instance, our trucking network out of Liège is growing at exceptionally good rates, with full track-and-trace capabilities. This allows us to have visibility throughout the transportation process, ensuring smooth operations."

A Look at Changi Airport's Vision

Jaisey Yip, Vice President of Cargo Business Division at Changi Airport Group, offers a compelling glimpse into the future of perishable trade, particularly in the vibrant landscape of Asia. With a projected population of 5.3 billion consumers by 2050 and a growing middle class, Asia's appetite for fresh and high-quality perishables is on the rise. From fruits and vegetables to chilled meat and seafood, the demand for these products is fueled by a shift towards healthy eating and lifestyle choices.

Jaisey highlights the significant role air cargo plays in meeting this demand, citing the annual growth rate of temperature-sensitive food produce imports in Asia. Changi Airport, as a pivotal hub in the region, has witnessed a surge in perishable imports, driven by countries like China, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam. "We've witnessed an exponential growth in the import of temperature-sensitive food produce," remarks Jaisey. "This growth, primarily driven by countries like China, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam, underscores the pivotal role of air cargo in catering to the region's perishable needs." The airport's strategic investments in cold chain infrastructure and partnerships with industry players have bolstered its position as a preferred hub for perishable trade.

The Cold Chain Challenge

"Despite the numerous advantages of transporting perishables by air, such as speed of delivery and extended shelf life, effective cold chain management remains a paramount challenge," asserts Jaisey. "According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, approximately 14% of total food produced globally is lost, and an additional 17% is wasted, largely due to inadequate cold chain management practices."

Recognizing the critical importance of maintaining an unbroken cold chain, Changi Airport has made substantial investments in cold chain infrastructure and equipment. With a combined cargo handlers' temperature-controlled warehouse



annual capacity exceeding 375,000 tons, Changi Airport ensures that perishable goods remain at optimal temperatures throughout their journey within the airport premises.

Changi Airport's Strategic Investments

"In a significant milestone for the region," continues Jaisey, "Changi Airport spearheaded the creation of the first IATA CEIV Fresh certified community in Southeast Asia in 2021. Collaborating with industry partners such as dnata Singapore, SATS, and Singapore Airlines, this certification sets baseline standards and compliance measures aimed at preventing food waste throughout the air transportation process."

Further cementing its commitment to quality in perishable trade, Singapore Airlines launched THRU FRESH, a specialized service designed for the secure transportation of perishables. "Through strategic partnerships with cargo terminal operators and ground handlers across key global hubs," Jaisey explains, "including Amsterdam, Barcelona, Beijing, Brussels, Frankfurt, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Shanghai, Singapore, and Zurich, THRU FRESH ensures the integrity of perishable shipments at every stage of their journey."

Changi ACCS

"In 2020," Jaisey emphasizes, "Changi Airport introduced the Changi Air Cargo Community System (ACCS), a community data-sharing platform designed to promote innovation and collaboration within the cargo handling process. This open ecosystem aggregates data from all parties involved in cargo handling, facilitating increased shipment visibility and operational excellence through the utilization of advanced technologies."

In conclusion, she underscores Changi Airport's commitment to end-to-end cold chain management and quality assurance initiatives. "Through strategic investments, industry partnerships, and innovative solutions," she states, "Changi Airport continues to set the standard for excellence in the transportation of perishable goods, ensuring that they reach their destination with freshness and quality intact."

Market Analysis and Future Trends

Beyond the insights provided by Challenge Group and Changi Airport, it's essential to examine broader market trends and future projections in the global perishable trade industry. According to industry reports, the demand for perishable products is expected to continue growing steadily, driven by factors such as population growth, changing consumer preferences, and the rise of e-commerce.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the shift towards online shopping, leading to increased demand for perishable goods delivered directly to consumers' doorsteps. This trend has presented both opportunities and challenges for industry players, as they strive to meet the evolving needs of consumers while ensuring the safety and quality of perishable products during transportation.

In response to these challenges, companies across the perishable trade supply chain are investing heavily in technology and innovation. From blockchain-based tracking systems to AI-driven predictive analytics, these advancements aim to improve visibility, efficiency, and traceability throughout the supply chain, ultimately enhancing the integrity of perishable shipments.

Looking ahead, experts predict continued growth in perishable trade volumes, particularly in regions with rapidly expanding populations and rising disposable incomes. Asia, in particular, is expected to remain a key driver of growth, with its burgeoning middle class fueling demand for fresh and high-quality perishable products.

Perishable commodities transportation is still an essential part of the supply chain as long as global trade keeps changing. With insights from industry leaders like Challenge Group and Changi Airport, along with a comprehensive analysis of market trends and future projections, it's evident that success in this domain hinges on a combination of expertise, infrastructure, and innovation.

From leveraging technology to ensuring the integrity of cold chain management, these players are at the forefront of shaping the future of perishable trade, ensuring that fresh produce and delicate goods reach consumers around the world, flying fresh every step of the way.

NORDIC AIR CARGO SYMPOSIUM 2024



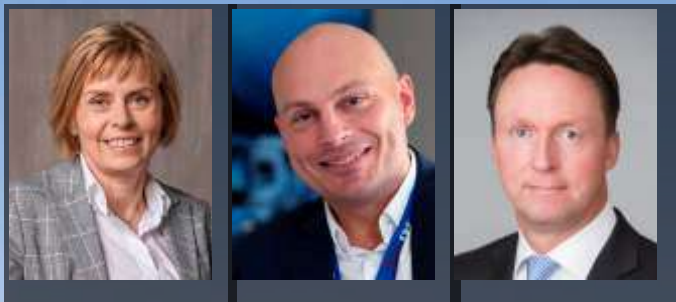
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Qantas Freight's resilience and growth in the face of global challenges

By Ayesha Rashid

Australia's freight and logistics market size this year is valued at USD 94.10 billion. Growing at a CAGR of 3.9% during the forecast period (2024-2029), it is estimated to reach USD 113.94 billion by 2029. (Mordor Intelligence)

It has been a turbulent year for airfreight transporters in Australia yet there is optimism the country's freight and logistics market will steadily grow in the coming years.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, just like the rest of the world, Australia's aviation industry suffered from the global travel ban, reducing tremendously belly-hold capacity for cargo. Yet, its air freight industry carried through the tough times, delivering vital healthcare supplies and other basic needs throughout the country.

Faced with weaker tonnage volumes, global supply chain disruptions pushed airfreight prices to record levels. But from 2023, airfreight prices have begun to normalize as global supply chain disruptions eased, while volumes remain below pre-pandemic levels.

In the past 35 years, Australia's road transport activity has grown significantly due to expanding road networks and increased economic activity, resulting in a seven-fold increase in road freight between 1970 and 2007 and an eight-fold increase between 1970 and 2020.

Australia's economy relies heavily on freight transport to move raw materials, semi-processed goods, and finished products. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the freight industry managed to maintain key supply chains, demonstrating its importance and resilience.

Australia's freight and logistics market size is currently estimated at USD 94.10 billion this year. It is expected to reach USD 113.94 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 3.9% during the forecast period (2024-2029) (Mordor Intelligence).

A representative from Qantas Freight who asked to be anonymous but agreed to provide a comprehensive outline of how Qantas Freight managed to establish itself as the leader in the Australian air cargo industry talks to **Air Cargo Update**.

Strong focus on efficiency and reliability

With a strategic approach and a strong focus on efficiency, reliability, and customer satisfaction, Qantas Freight has secured its position as a leader in the Australian market.

By continuously investing in cutting-edge technologies, expanding its global network, and providing top-notch services, Qantas Freight has set the standard for excellence in air cargo transportation.

One of the oldest airlines in the world, Qantas Airways Limited was founded in Winton, Queensland, on November 16, 1920.

Originally named Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Limited, the airline operated its first flight in 1922 with the first scheduled services connecting regional towns in Queensland.

The airline quickly expanded its operations to include airmail and eventually pioneered long-distance flights across the globe.

What hasn't changed over the years is their commitment to safety and customer service. According to the Qantas Freight interviewed in this article, any discussion about the



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Integrated scales and labelling systems are in place at all our terminals, improving accuracy for safer operations.

"Our fleet of dedicated freighter aircraft, including B737F, B767F, A321P2F, and A332P2F, serves as the backbone of our cargo operations, seamlessly complementing our belly space capacity for both domestic and international flights.

"With strategically positioned cargo terminals equipped with state-of-the-art tracking technologies, we ensure swift tail-to-tail connections and real-time visibility of freight at every stage of its journey.

"Our specially trained teams, stationed at major airports across Australia, bring expertise in complex load build-ups and handle a diverse range of freighter aircraft types with precision and efficiency."

Meeting Online Shopping Demand

To meet e-commerce demand from its customers across Australia, Qantas Freight is in the works to add six Airbus A321 aircraft to its domestic fleet.

A structural shift towards online shopping has driven a step change in cargo volumes for the national carrier's freight division since COVID-19 began.

Five Boeing 737 freighters approaching the end of their economic lives will be replaced by six A321s between the beginning of the 2024 calendar year and the middle of 2026.

In comparison with the older 737 freighters, the A321 freighters can carry 23 tons of cargo, nine tons more, and consume 30% less fuel per ton.

"Demand for Qantas Freight services has been stronger than ever in recent years thanks to online shopping trends, and our fleet investments will ensure we're able to continue to meet this rising demand well into the future," the spokesperson said.

According to the then CEO of Qantas Group Alan Joyce, who stepped down from his CEO role in September 2023, "Qantas Freight has been one of the standout performers for the Group during the pandemic as Australians

company's domination in the air cargo industry cannot ignore its strategic expansion and acquisition initiatives.

Over the years, Qantas Freight has strategically expanded its network to cover key international trade routes, connecting major cities worldwide. Through a series of strategic acquisitions and partnerships, Qantas Freight has strengthened its market presence and service offerings, solidifying its position as a global leader in air cargo transportation.

Qantas Freight spokesperson said, "Qantas Freight is Australia's largest independent air freight carrier and has been handling a diverse range of goods from mail and e-commerce to pets and fresh produce and bulkier specialist items like cars, helicopters and farm machinery for more than a century. Our services provide a critical link in domestic and international supply chains, moving 4000 daily shipments to more than 500 destinations worldwide."

Advanced Logistics and Technology Infrastructure

Qantas Freight's advanced logistics and technology infrastructure play a pivotal role in its dominance in the air cargo industry.

Through cutting-edge technology and streamlined logistics processes, Qantas Freight ensures seamless operations and real-time tracking of shipments.

This enhances efficiency and enables the airline to meet the evolving needs of customers in a highly competitive market. Technology Infrastructure; Advanced tracking systems, and; Real-time data analytics.

Infrastructure:Modern warehouses and handling facilitiesState-of-the-art security systemsSpecialized cargo handling equipmentIntegrated IT systems for seamless operations

"Advanced logistics and technology infrastructure are integral pillars of our strategy, enabling Qantas Freight to deliver unparalleled efficiency and reliability in the air cargo industry."

With the largest footprint of terminal infrastructure in the region, Qantas Freight is creating world-leading digital solutions to evolve the traditional ground handling experience.



rapidly shifted to online shopping. While some of that shift is temporary, demand remains well above pre-pandemic levels even with the lifting of almost all COVID-related restrictions.

"This is one of the largest ever investments in our domestic freight fleet, which will enable Qantas Freight to capture more of that demand and will provide the opportunity to help Freight further grow revenue and earnings.

"The first three A321P2F have been a fantastic addition to our fleet and operating a single type of narrow-body aircraft in the future will enable us to generate further operational efficiencies and significantly reduce emissions per tonne of freight flown."

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead - initiatives being rolled out across Qantas Freight include: A new capacity management system to ensure they maximize uplift on capacity-constrained routes.

Investments in a new fleet of fire-retardant unit load devices - game-changers in the industry which further add to onboard safety.

Working with airport authorities across the nation to develop plans for terminal infrastructures from 2025 including Western Sydney.

Australia's new cargo hub

Western Sydney International Airport (WSI) will fulfill the growing demand for aviation capacity in the Sydney basin and enhance accessibility to flights for people in Western Sydney as well as provide economic opportunities for businesses.

The airport will serve domestic and international flights from 2026, making it one of Australia's most significant infrastructure projects in decades.

In addition to the greenfield airport, there is a 3.7-kilometer runway, terminal, and airport facilities that will initially serve up to 10 million passengers a year and a capacity of 220,000 tons of cargo annually.

WSI is Australia's first co-designed cargo precinct.

There is no doubt that WSI will become one of Australia's most important cargo hubs. Aside from motorway access to Western Sydney's logistics centers and 24/7 operations, the Cargo Precinct planned has a crucial element that Sydney's been lacking: growth room.

Air cargo, logistics, support, and commercial

Safe Pet Handling



When it comes to the safe and comfortable travel of pets and other animals, Qantas Freight prioritizes their welfare above all else.

From dogs and cats to rabbits, and domestic birds, Qantas Freight ensures their journey is smooth and stress-free.

"Every year, we transport thousands of beloved pets and animals to destinations spanning Australia and beyond, ensuring their safe and comfortable journey every step of the way. Our expertise extends beyond household pets to encompass the specialized movement of diverse animals, from reptiles to racehorses, zoo residents, and marine life destined for research or aquariums, all of which demand meticulous handling and care.

"From fresh perishables like food and flowers to critical pharmaceuticals such as medicines and blood samples, as well as highly secure items like delicate artworks and custom goods like racing cars, we handle a wide range of cargo with precision and reliability."

With Qantas Freight, pet owners can rest assured knowing that their beloved companions are in good hands throughout the entire travel process.



uses will be accommodated at WSI Cargo Precinct, both immediately and over time.

A flexible, future-proofed layout will be provided by the WSI Cargo Precinct to meet the demands and trends of the future. It is planned to be one of the best cargo precincts in the world that will be thriving, safe, sustainable, and a great place to work and operate.

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Ukraine Lions: From the Frontline to 'Freedom'

By Gemma Q. Casas

Born into captivity, mistreated, malnourished, and rescued at the outbreak of war, Born Free's 'Ukraine Lions' have now finally found safety and sanctuary in their forever home.

At just three years old, lions Tsar and Jamil have experienced much suffering in their short lives – mistreatment, exploitation, and a violent war in Ukraine.

After an incredible 8,000-mile journey and a monumental rescue mission involving countless passionate people and organizations around the world, their misery is now just a memory. The brothers started

their new lives in their ancestral homeland, Africa. They were released for the first time to experience, the sights, sounds, and smell of South Africa at the Big Cat's sanctuary, the Shamwari Private Game Reserve, run by the international wildlife charity Born Free.

Born into captivity in a Ukrainian zoo, Tsar and Jamil were taken from their mother as tiny cubs and sold to a farm where they were exploited as a 'tourist attraction'. Kept in utterly unsuitable conditions, fed a poor-quality diet and without specialist care, the young lions became malnourished and sickly.

Thankfully, following pressure from local animal protection organizations, the lions were handed over to a wildlife rescue center in Kyiv. Here, the full extent of their suffering became apparent. Veterinary examinations revealed both lions had calcium deficiencies and Tsar had bone fractures. However, with proper care and nutrition, Tsar and Jamil began to recover from their ordeal – until further hardship came their way.

The rescue mission

In early 2022, the outbreak of war in Ukraine presented a fresh threat to the lions' future. Despite appalling conditions and the devastating human hardship faced by the country, an incredible team at the Ukrainian rescue



center worked alongside a Polish zoo and Natuurhulpcentrum (NHC) to evacuate the cats, via a brief stay in Poland, to the safety of NHC's wildlife rescue centre in Belgium.

Since March 2022, Tsar and Jamil have been cared for by experts at Natuurhulpcentrum. Thanks to a caring and dedicated team, this halfway house has served as a haven for the lions while Born Free meticulously crafted plans for their re-homing in South Africa.

That epic re-homing journey began one Friday night in March when the brothers were gently loaded into their custom-made travel crates. The lions first travelled by road to Luxembourg airport, before departing for Johannesburg on a specialist flight, kindly provided free of charge by Born Free's air transport partner Cargolux. After 10 hours in the air,



the lions touched down in South Africa. After being met and checked over by Born Free's vet, Tsar and Jamil's overland road trip to South Africa's Eastern Cape began.

The lions covered over 1,000 kilometers on their journey from Johannesburg, every step under the watchful eye of Born Free's expert animal care team, who stopped regularly to check on the lions and to ensure they had adequate water. When they reached their destination, Born Free's Big Cat Sanctuary at Shamwari, the team were delighted to see both lions dash straight out of their crates into the natural bush of their 2.5 acre enclosure.

Half an hour later, the Born Free Animal Care

team located the lions reunited, lying together in the night house of their enclosure. This probably felt like the safest place, with shade from the South African sun. Tsar and Jamil will take time to adjust to the sights, sounds and smells of the bush, and the space of their expansive new home.

The Born Free team will be monitoring the lions closely, and are hopeful they will start exploring their new 'forever home' soon, perhaps after being fed lunch in the early afternoon. As can happen after a long transfer, both lions had small bruises and scrapes on their face, which were not of concern to the onsite vet, and should heal quickly in the African sun.

Tsar and Jamil are now part of a proud heritage of 50 big cats given new lives in the sanctuary of Shamwari, by Born Free.

The logistical feat of re-locating two young lions cannot be underestimated. Many hundreds of hours of planning, evaluation and care have been undertaken by Born Free's experts and specialists, together with our valued partners Natuurhulpcentrum, Shamwari Private Game Reserve, Cargolux, and British Airways



Holidays, to ensure the safety, comfort and security of the lions at every stage of their journey.

Global support

Born Free offers its official thanks to the many generous supporters and wonderful corporate partners who've ensured the success of this incredible relocation and made this rehoming a reality. In particular, its key partner, British Airways Holidays, which has generously donated funds to cover three years of care for Tsar and Jamil, as well as the cost of the custom-built, specially designed crates used for the lions' relocation.

It also thanked Cargolux for its expert services and for transporting the lions free of charge from Luxembourg to Johannesburg. "This truly team effort means these beautiful animals have now found solace in South Africa," said Born Free.

"Cargolux is proud to be the air transport partner of Born Free for the relocation of the two lions that have been exploited in captivity all their lives to their new home in South Africa, where they will have the opportunity to live in an expansive sanctuary setting, surrounded by their natural habitats. Cargolux is a strong advocate for animal welfare, and supporting projects such as this one reflects our commitment to the cause. We are proud to be able to use our 50 years of experience in live animal transport to return these majestic creatures to a natural environment," said Richard Forson, Cargolux President & CEO.

Tsar and Jamil's rehoming is especially poignant for Born Free as it coincides with the charity's 40th anniversary. They are the 58th and 59th lions to be rehomed since the charity was founded in 1984.

As Born Free co-founder Dame Virginia McKenna says, "The story of these lions is the story of Born Free, one of perseverance, hope, and change – a story where every individual animal matters."

Maggie Balaskas, Born Free's Head of Rescue and Care, added, "Born Free will continue to work tirelessly to end the captivity, abuse, and exploitation of wild animals and ensure these precious creatures are given a life worth living."

Catherine Gillson, Born Free Manager, Shamwari Private Game Reserve, noted, "We are delighted that Tsar and Jamil are safe with us at Shamwari. They have been shifted to safety so many times in their young lives that we hope the final stage of their journey 'back to Africa' will bring them peace and a chance to enjoy a more natural life - a million miles away from the



existence they endured in their formative years."

Frederik Thoelen, Biologist, Natuurhulpcentrum, said they are happy that the two young lions are now safely back in Africa. "We welcomed them exactly two years ago when the war in Ukraine had just started, now we can finally take them to their forever home in South Africa. Our part in this incredible journey is done and we are sure that the lion brothers will now have a very good life under the African sun."

Claire Bentley, Managing Director, British Airways Holidays commented, "Nature, wildlife, and destination communities play a critical role in our business. That is why we are delighted to be funding a three-year care program for Tsar and Jamil who now get to enjoy a happy forever life in Shamwari, one of our fantastic safari lodge partners in South Africa. The project will also provide us a bridge to raise awareness of the importance of nature and wildlife in building resilience, which is why we are also initiating a learning-focused experience in Shamwari for 120 local students."

Find out more about Born Free's 40 years of action for wild animals, and how to donate to its vital animal welfare, compassionate conservation, community empowerment, and policy work, here: www.bornfree.org.uk

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Global logistics industry must embrace digitalization to keep up with changing times

By Gemma O. Casas



According to Mordor Intelligence, the Logistics Automation Market size is estimated at USD 75.24 billion in 2024. It is expected to reach USD 120.63 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 9.90% during the forecast period—2024-2029.



Still recovering from the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic while confronting other challenges, the world now heavily relies on the logistics industry to facilitate global business activities.

The industry has become the lifeblood of global trade in recent years it has massively grown in value to €8.4 trillion in 2021 and is projected to further grow to over €13.7 billion by 2027, according to experts.

With the emergence of smart technologies and the so-called fourth industrial revolution, the industry is up for the challenge of embracing digitalization.

But while many countries have begun their digital transformation more than a decade ago, many are also still struggling to keep up with the changing times due to scarce resources and skilled workforce.

Vineet Malhotra, co-founder and director of Kale Logistics Solutions, one of the world's most trusted global cloud-based tech providers for some Fortune

“There are two buzzwords in the overall global supply chain these days. One is sustainability. The second buzzword is digitalization. It means bringing in some solutions to empower the industry to digitize itself to seamlessly connect with others and streamline their operations,” Malhotra told Air Cargo Update.

500 companies worldwide, offering a comprehensive suite of tech solutions for the logistics industry, says there's no way to move forward but to embrace digitalization.

“There are two buzzwords in the overall global supply chain these days. One is sustainability. The second buzzword is digitalization. It means bringing in some solutions to empower the industry to digitize itself to seamlessly connect with others and streamline their operations,” Malhotra told Air Cargo Update.

Malhotra's company which was formed in 2010 was among India's pioneers in the tech industry that specializes in logistics and the global transport industry. Of its more than 5,500 clients worldwide, over 50 are airports, and 50 are seaports around the world.

Kale is helping the global logistics industry transform its operations with digital technologies.

“15 years back, when we were looking at it, we saw the need for digitalization,” says Malhotra, an electronics communications engineering graduate with post-studies in management. “We (collaborated) with the Air Cargo Agents Association of India (ACAAI). The association became the executive sponsor of the project to build a cargo community system. They didn't put any money. But they supported our idea. We had our break at Mumbai Airport when it was automated.”

Today, Kale's solutions are used in more than 50 airports across the world and to more than 50 seaports worldwide in addition to thousands of other



From left: FIATA President Tugut Erkeskin; Kale Logistics Solutions Global Head-Maritime and Multimodal Solutions Nagarjun Peri, His Excellency Mohamed Ben Salem, Secretary General, Federation of the UAE Chambers of Commerce & Industry, and Chairman, International Chamber of Commerce – UAE, and; Dr. Stephane Graber, FIATA Director General, at the recently concluded FIATA-Region Middle East Africa Field Meeting and Conference 2024 held at the Atlantis Dubai. The event was co-hosted by the UAE National Association of Freight and Logistics. Photo by Deepu Raj

companies in logistics, and air freight, among many others in the transport sector.

“Digitalization is essential for businesses to remain competitive,” said Malhotra. Digitalization is indeed no longer an option for businesses in the global logistics industry: It's a necessity to streamline the process and save time and money.

Apart from software solutions, many companies in the industry have introduced smart technologies in their system which include automated storage and retrieval systems (AS/RS), automated sorting systems, de-palletizing/palletizing systems, conveyor systems, automatic identification and data collection (AIDC), order picking), software, and services), end-user industry (food and beverage, post and parcel, groceries, general merchandise, apparel, manufacturing), among other things.



Opening doors for innovations with collaboration

Digitalization opens doors for innovation in the logistics industry. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have the potential to revolutionize logistics operations.

By leveraging these technologies, companies can develop predictive maintenance strategies, optimize transportation networks, and create data-driven solutions for complex logistics challenges. This focus on innovation fosters continuous improvement and paves the way for future growth.

At the two-day field meeting and conference hosted by the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) RAME (Region Africa Middle East) and the UAE National Association of Freight and Logistics (NAFL) held at the Atlantis Dubai in March, Kale signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NAFL agreeing to help developing digital solutions to streamline processes and data analytics to facilitate global trade.

The agreement aims to further drive digitalization in the UAE logistics sector by enabling NAFL stakeholders, members, and the private sector in general to improve efficiency and transparency and benefit from a digital platform that supports operational processes and data sharing between stakeholders and facilitates the paperless exchange of trade-related information. The platform, which will initially focus on the UAE market, aims to improve trade flows within the region and capitalize on the strategic location and connectivity of the country and the entire RAME region.



Nadia Abdul Aziz
President, NAFL

“The FIATA-RAME conference was a valuable platform to foster collaboration and explore innovative solutions. The meeting identified several key areas for improvement in the regional logistics sector. One of our focus areas is harnessing the opportunities offered by digitalization, particularly in the private sector, which includes many of our members,” said Nadia Abdul Aziz, President of NAFL.

“To this end, our partnership with Kale Logistics will help private sector players to streamline processes through digitalization, measure sustainability data and simplify business processes. In the meantime, we are also talking to entities, which include the National Information Centre, global audit experts and collaboration between the government players and the private sector to improve business and improve the sustainability of the sector. We aim to turn the challenges in the industry into opportunities, improve the flow of trade in the region and utilize the connectivity of the UAE and the region to overcome the current challenges,” she explained.

The two-day event brought together key players from the African and Middle Eastern logistics and global experts from the industry, serving as a crucial platform for knowledge sharing, forging partnerships, and charting a path toward a more resilient and collaborative logistics landscape in Africa and the Middle East.

SITA celebrates 75 years of innovation and leadership in air transport technology

Geneva, Switzerland: SITA, a global leader in air transport technology, is celebrating its 75th anniversary, marking seven and a half decades of ground-breaking innovation, unwavering commitment, and exceptional service to the aviation industry.

Founded in 1949 by 11 pioneering airlines, SITA has been owned by the air transport industry and driven by its needs since its inception.

SITA's history is one of constant technological innovation, starting in 1950 when it took its first steps towards creating the world's largest data network, which stretched across 75 communication centers for 52 airline members by 1957.

In 1966, SITA launched the world's first working network to use packet switching principles, continuing to harness the most cutting-edge developments in IT and telecommunications—even contributing to the creation of the internet in 1969 by activating the world's first nodal distributed network.

Over the decades, as SITA continued to constantly improve and build upon its network, it also expanded its expertise to support airlines, airports, and governments in processing passengers and baggage, managing borders, driving digital efficiencies and sustainability for aircraft, and beyond. In 1984, in time to support the needs of airlines, airports, and passengers for the Los Angeles Olympic Games, SITA



introduced its Common Use Terminal Equipment (CUTE) system which multiplied tenfold the number of airlines a domestic US terminal could handle.

SITA's involvement in key global sporting events did not end there, from developing the world's first e-visa system for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, to working closely with government, airport, and airline stakeholders to integrate digital identity and travel authorization for fans' smooth arrival at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

In 2017, SITA introduced its ground-breaking biometric ID management technology SITA Smart Path for seamless passenger journeys, supporting airports' and airlines' shift to touchless, digital travel through the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving into the future with universal digital identities.

"As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, we remain steadfast in our commitment to reinvent travel and transport," said David Lavorel, CEO at SITA. "Our vision is fueled by our passion for the industry, our forward-looking expertise, and our dedication to positively impacting our customers' business."

SITA's focus on the fast-evolving industry is evident in its strategic direction, which emphasizes flexibility, agility, and innovation. Key priorities include the industry's operational excellence, digital transformation and sustainability, including turnaround optimization, fully biometric journeys, and efficient aircraft.

SITA's leadership role in the travel and transport industry extends to achieving leadership in fast-evolving trends, technologies, and industry requirements. The company is focused on building on its existing leadership as well as new growth areas such as regional airports, vertiports, sustainability, air traffic management, digital travel, and identities, as well as the maritime and rail industries.

AJET, new brand of Turkish Airlines, has started ticket sales

Istanbul, Turkiye: AnadoluJet, established as a sub-brand of Turkish Airlines in 2008 to meet the air transportation needs with more advantageous options, has started its ticket sales under the name "AJET" on its official website ajet.com as of March 12.

AnadoluJet has reunited over 150 million guests with their loved ones over the past 16 years since its establishment.

Now under its new name and scope, AJET is aiming to soar higher by

offering a more modern, comfortable, and accessible experience for its guests while planning to be a prominent low-cost airline on a global scale and further strengthen its competitive position in the market.



AJET will operate flights to a total of 93 destinations, including 41 domestic and 52 international, with its fleet of 95 aircraft during the summer season of 2024. Within the next 10 years, it plans to fly to a total of 44 countries as a global growth target with a fleet of 200 aircraft.



Riyadh Air celebrates its historic first anniversary, ready to take off in 2025

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Riyadh Air, Saudi Arabia's new world-class airline, marked its first anniversary on 12 March with significant agreements with key players in global aviation, transportation, technology, and sports, among other industries, as it prepares for its take-off by 2025.

During its first 12 months, the airline had signed agreements with Saudia, Turkish Airlines, Boeing, GE, CAE, Swiss AS, Lufthansa Systems and Lucid Motors and Atlético de Madrid. As well as with tech giants IBM, Accenture, Microsoft, Oracle, Sabre, Accenture and Adobe.

Riyadh Air is set to fly to 100 countries by 2030. The airline is accelerating its journey to take off in 2025. It aims to become the world's most forward-thinking carrier, embracing the best sustainability practices, elevating air travel, and setting a new standard for reliability, comfort, and hospitality.

As a catalyst for the National Transport and Logistics Strategy and National Tourism Strategy, Riyadh Air is playing a key role in contributing to Saudi Arabia's wider economic diversification and jobs creation, toward realizing Vision 2030 goals, while contributing to KSA's non-oil GDP growth by USD 20 billion and directly and indirectly creating over 200,000 new jobs globally and locally.

Looking back on a colossal first year, Riyadh Air CEO Tony Douglas, said: "2023 was a monumental year for Riyadh Air and we're immensely proud of the progress we've made in the last 12 months as we celebrate our first anniversary - but we're only just getting started. This year is set to be an even bigger one for us and we can't wait to reveal more as we continue to accelerate towards our maiden flight in 2025, as we become the most forward-thinking carrier in the skies."

"I would like to thank our partners, stakeholders and team for supporting us in our vision to disrupt



the aviation industry and deliver an airline experience like no other," he added.

Following its inauguration in March 2023 by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), Riyadh Air placed a significant aircraft order of Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners, showing a real statement of intent, as the airline aims to become the world's most forward-thinking carrier, embracing the best sustainability practices, elevating air travel and setting a new standard for reliability, comfort, and hospitality.

Riyadh Air also signed a deal for 90 GENx engines to power its Boeing 787 fleet along with being officially welcomed into the global aviation ecosystem with the unique 'RX' code.

Riyadh Air unveiled its stunning dual-livery designs in Paris and Dubai

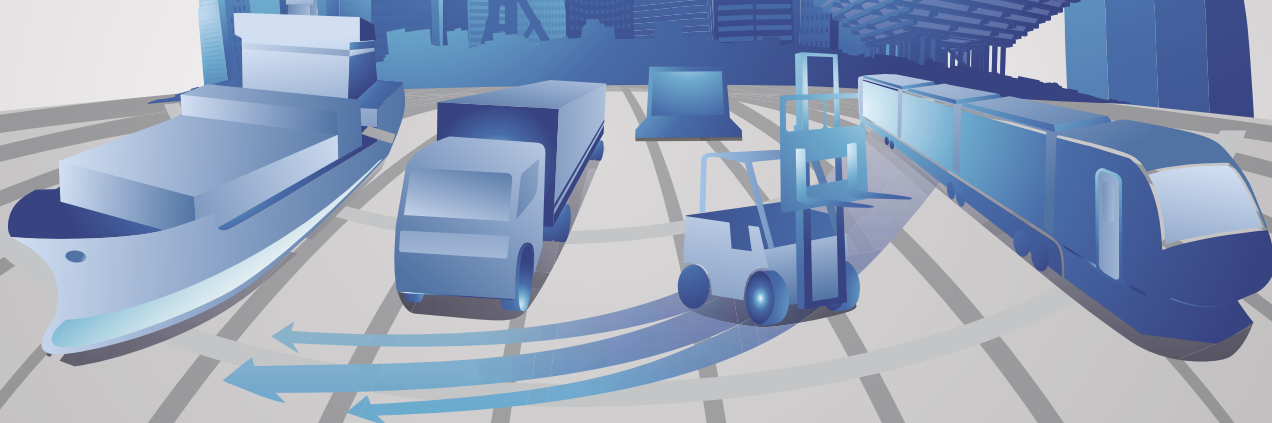
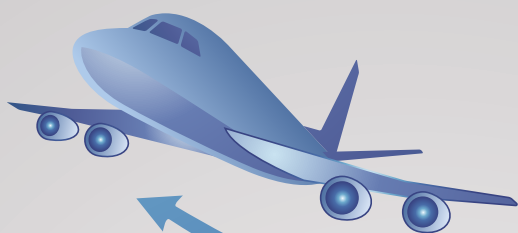
In June, Riyadh Air unveiled to the world its first livery with a flight over its home city of Riyadh, ahead of its official public debut at the 54th Paris Airshow. The historic moment was marked with a ceremony attended by highnesses, excellencies and official dignitaries and was the first time the vibrant lavender-inspired livery was seen in the skies.

At the Dubai Airshow, Riyadh Air showcased the second of its spectacular dual-livery designs that displays meticulously crafted details, combining style and sophistication, while paying tribute to Saudi Arabia's warm hospitality and future-focused vision.

Riyadh Air also made its debut at several industry events contributing to discussions across the aviation and travel ecosystem with local, regional, and international stakeholders, partners, and peers. At the 56th Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO) AGM and the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Tony Douglas, CEO, Riyadh Air, shared updates on Riyadh Air's path to its first commercial flight and wider contribution to Vision 2030.

The establishment of Riyadh Air in line with PIF's mandate to unlock the capabilities of key sectors locally to drive the diversification of Saudi Arabia's economy. The airline will also support the Saudi Aviation Strategy's broader vision and enable the National Tourism Strategy and contribute to KSA non-oil GDP growth by USD 20 billion and directly and indirectly creating over 200,000 new jobs globally and locally.

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India's Aviation Sector Set to Soar with Twin Airport Strategy

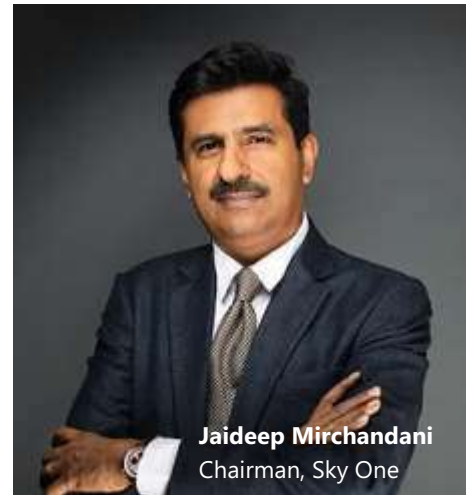
Sharjah, UAE: Jaideep Mirchandani, Chairman of Sky One, a prominent aviation conglomerate based in the UAE, has voiced the potential advantages of adopting a dual-airport system to strengthen India's aviation sector. Mirchandani emphasized that such a strategy could alleviate air traffic congestion, enhance accessibility, and bolster resilience within the industry.

Pointing to successful models in major global cities like London, New York, Shanghai, and Tokyo, Mirchandani highlighted the necessity for India to embrace a twin airport approach as air travel continues to surge across the nation.

"The Ministry of Civil Aviation's announcement in October 2023 outlined plans to develop six dual airports in India by 2030," stated Mirchandani. He outlined notable initiatives such as the Noida International Airport at Jewar, designed to support Delhi's aviation needs, and the DB Patil International Airport in Navi Mumbai, aimed at complementing Mumbai's air traffic. Additionally, Manohar International Airport is set to serve as an auxiliary facility to Dabolim Airport in Goa.

With a vision to accommodate an estimated 900 million passengers annually by 2030, the government aims to expand the twin airport network to 15 facilities by 2040 and over 30 by 2047 under the Ministry's guidance.

"A dual airport system holds promise for decongesting existing airports and expanding infrastructure to meet escalating travel demands," explained Mirchandani. He cited a 2023 study on 'Travel Trends in the Next 30 Years,' which underlined the necessity for diverse airport types to cater to future city needs.



Jaideep Mirchandani
Chairman, Sky One

Mirchandani emphasized that such systems not only drive economic growth across regions but also optimize capacity allocation by strategically relocating aircraft operations to secondary airports, thereby enhancing international traffic and overall capacity.

In conclusion, Mirchandani asserted, "Transitioning to a dual airport system swiftly will support and propel India's aviation modernization, solidifying its position as a global aviation leader."

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OPUL Jets: New UK private aviation brand lifts off in London, Dubai, India and the Isle of Man

London: OPUL Jets, a new UK provider of private air charter services, has kicked off its operations with an initial fleet comprising a Bombardier Global Express XRS and two Bombardier Learjet 40 and Learjet 45 business jets.

OPUL Jets was founded last year with offices and operations in London, the Isle of Man, India and Dubai.

Two G-registered light jets will be stationed at London Biggin Hill Airport, as well as the Isle of Man's Ronaldsway Airport, to be joined by additional G-registered aircraft later this year.

The Global Express, on the Maltese registry, will be a 'floating fleet' aircraft, also available for charter out of the Al Maktoum International Airport in Dubai. Additional acquisitions will be confirmed over the forthcoming months, with further expansion into the Middle East and Asia also planned.

Harry Ackerman OPUL Jets' CEO, overseeing sales, aircraft management and charter, has extensive

experience in the aviation sector, global trade and investment. He has served private family offices in the UAE, supporting their international growth strategy in the logistics and aviation sector.

Ackerman says he is excited about establishing a presence for executive jets in the UK, particularly in the thriving market for executive charter, in the realm of light jet cabin aircraft.

Concurrently, the Middle East has been experiencing a steady rebound post-pandemic and OPUL is an approved charter company under the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority All OPUL's aircraft are type-rated for London City Airport, positioning the company to meet the anticipated demand and provide business travellers with unparalleled access to the



Harry Ackerman
OPUL Jets CEO

heart of London.

"We are delighted to bring OPUL Jets into the market with our owned fleet; enabling us to quickly respond to client and broker requests. We are looking forward to elevating expectations in both private aviation and luxury travel. OPUL Jets is a new member of the British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) and has also applied to join the Air Charter Association," said Ackerman.

Clients flying OPUL Jets booking direct or via a charter brokerage can take advantage of personalized VIP concierge services and in-flight catering. Supplemental services include personalized security, chauffeur service, restaurant bookings, and entertainment as detailed on its new website: www.opuljets.com

AERO CARE announces new Miami headquarters as it joins forces with Alchemy Aero Corporation

Miami, Florida: AERO CARE, the specialist provider of engine aftermarket services and support to the narrowbody commercial aviation industry has recently opened its new headquarters in Miami, Florida.

The new facility ensures that AERO CARE is strategically positioned to support its rapidly expanding global customer base and it will house the organisation's stock of engine parts for CFM56 and V2500.

Focused on enabling operators to fly their engines for as long and as economically as possible, AERO CARE concentrates on mid to late-life engines, providing solutions that cover green-time leasing, parts supply, and asset management. For more than 17 years, AERO CARE has guided and supported its customers, providing the reassuring solutions required to ensure their continued and successful operations.

"Miami is the commercial aviation engine hub of the Americas, so it is logical for AERO CARE to be based here, however, we will be supported by our European office in Bucharest, Romania to ensure our global reach and 24/7/365 service is faultless," said AERO CARE Managing Director Anca Mihalache, who has spearheaded the company's strategic move to the US.

"As a portfolio company of Alchemy Aero Corporation, the specialist aviation investment & trading platform, we have the secure financial support we need to acquire the engine assets our customers need. We have an ambitious growth target and look forward to cementing our position as a respected mature aircraft assets



Anca Mihalache, Managing Director of AERO CARE, and Robert Syms, President of Alchemy Aero Corporation. AERO CARE Photo

solutions provider," she added.

AERO CARE stocks the most relevant and critical inventory to help minimize fleet downtime and promote profitable operations.

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Korean Air Finalizes Order for 33 Airbus A350 Aircraft

Korean Air has solidified its order for 33 Airbus A350 aircraft, comprising 27 A350-1000s and six A350-900s. Airbus has confirmed that Korean Air has officially inked the deal, following the carrier's initial announcement on 21 March.

Jason Yoo, Executive Vice President of Korean Air, expressed confidence in the decision, stating, "The A350's exceptional range, fuel efficiency, and passenger comfort make it a great fit for our global network. We are confident that the introduction of the A350 to our fleet will drive operational efficiencies and elevate the overall travel experience for our passengers."

According to Airbus, the A350s will enable Korean Air to operate all existing intercontinental routes with 25% lower fuel consumption compared to previous-generation aircraft. Additionally, the aircraft type will open up possibilities for Korean Air to explore new destinations.

Although Korean Air has yet to operate the A350, its compatriot Asiana Airlines, which Korean Air is in the process of acquiring, currently operates 15 A350-900s.

According to Airbus, the A350s will enable Korean Air to operate all existing intercontinental routes with 25% lower fuel consumption compared to previous-generation aircraft.



The A350s are expected to replace older aircraft in Korean Air's fleet, although neither the airline nor Airbus has provided a timeline for deliveries. Korean Air also has outstanding orders for A321neos, Boeing 787-9s, 787-10s, and 737 Max 8s.

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Zayed International Airport revolutionizes passenger experience with IDEMIA's Biometric Solutions

Abu Dhabi, UAE: In a landmark achievement for air travel technology, Zayed International Airport has successfully processed over one million passengers through Abu Dhabi's new terminal since its inauguration on 15 November 2023, marking a significant milestone in harnessing the power of cutting-edge biometric technology.

Building on a long-term commitment to advancing airport capabilities, IDEMIA has been at the forefront of innovation in the UAE since 2011. The deployment of a comprehensive border management solution at Abu Dhabi Airport, featuring the world's first multi-biometric entry/exit system, has significantly bolstered border security while simultaneously enhancing the passenger experience and throughput.

The success of this groundbreaking project has led to its extension to the country's four other international airports.

The Single Token Journey (STJ) solution, a highlight of this collaboration, employs advanced facial recognition technology to streamline the passenger experience. By assigning a unique digital identifier to every traveler, the STJ solution eliminates the need for multiple documents, enabling passengers to move from curb to gate, including the border clearance step, in a record time of just 12 minutes.

Elena Sorlini, MD and CEO, Zayed International Airport, commented: "The initial rollout of cutting-edge biometrics at Zayed International Airport underscores our dedication to enhancing airport experiences through innovation and technology, ensuring efficiency, convenience, and superior service. Once fully implemented, Abu



Dhabi will pioneer as the world's first airport with biometrics integrated at every stage, ensuring travelers enjoy a seamless, safe, and secure journey."

Osama Al Makhamreh, Vice President, Sales - Middle East & Africa, IDEMIA Public Security, noted Zayed International Airport's achievement has set a new global standard for passenger facilitation.

"The processing of over one million passengers since November is a significant achievement for us, and it underscores the scalability, security, and efficiency of the STJ solution. Together, we are setting a new global standard for passenger facilitation," he said.

The initiative aligns with Zayed International Airport's commitment to adopting cutting-edge technologies that streamline the travel process, reinforcing the UAE's position as a leading hub for technological advancement and superior passenger facilitation.

Hamad International Airport introduces dedicated transfer security lanes for families with children



Doha, Qatar: Hamad International Airport (DOH) continues to elevate its travel experience with the introduction of dedicated screening lanes for families with younger children transferring through the airport.

The dedicated family lanes will reduce wait times at security checkpoints and provide staff assistance to help families with their personal belongings, minimizing stress and wait times. Following a successful testing phase in the transfer screening area, it will be expanded to other security checkpoints, ensuring families enjoy a

smooth journey throughout the airport.

To further enhance this experience and ensure it is tailored to meet travelers' needs, Hamad International Airport says it will gather feedback and suggestions for improvement from passengers utilizing these dedicated lanes.

Hamad International Airport says it is continuing to set new standards in modern air travel, prioritizing passenger experience and safety at every step. Over the years, Hamad International Airport has significantly reduced passenger wait times at security checkpoints to industry-leading levels, ensuring well over 95% of passengers wait for less than five minutes to go through the security process, whilst at the same time enhancing the airport's security levels.

Passengers transferring through the airport can conveniently keep their electronic devices and liquid containers in their hand luggage at checkpoints, streamlining the security process, and resulting in overwhelmingly positive customer feedback, with a 97.2% passenger satisfaction rate.

Renowned for its family-friendly amenities, Hamad International Airport offers a range of facilities tailored to accommodate travelers with children. From baby changing rooms to family toilets designed to accommodate children, the airport prioritizes convenience, privacy and comfort for families. Young travelers can enjoy play areas, while those seeking relaxation can retreat to one of the 17 quiet rooms featuring comfortable recliner seats and subdued lighting.

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Kale Logistics Solutions appoints Zulekha as new Global CHRO

Mumbai, India: Kale Logistics Solutions (Kale) has appointed Zulekha as its new Global Chief of Human Resources (CHRO), to build and nurture the logistics tech specialist's growing team across ten countries.

Zulekha brings over 17 years of experience in HR across industries including logistics and education tech, manufacturing, media, and IT. She has a focus on digital HR solutions, from automating processes to using data to drive process innovation.

"Kale is an agile tech organisation, and digitisation is in our DNA, so it is natural for HR to embrace digital tools," said Zulekha. "Our workforce includes the new generation that requires a different level of engagement, and



digitalisation will empower us to design and implement processes that will be easy and convenient to use to serve employees across diversified

demographics."

Commenting on the appointment, Rajesh Panicker, Co-Founder and COO of Kale Logistics Solutions said, "Zulekha's appointment comes at a crucial juncture for our company as we continue to grow and consolidate our operations. Her deep understanding of human capital dynamics and strategic mindset will be invaluable as we navigate the complexities of our international operations and further strengthen our position as a market leader."

Kale is expanding its presence in the maritime sector, developing next-gen port community systems to drive digitalisation and sustainability in the sector. As a key market leader, it engages in more than 100 air cargo stations across the globe.

CARGO IQ launches new membership engagement scheme as Marie Seco-Köppen takes over as Executive Director

Hong Kong, China: Cargo iQ has named Marie Seco-Köppen as its new Executive Director effective May 2024. The company also formally launched a new membership engagement scheme which aims to further drive quality in the air cargo industry.

The scheme includes a tiered membership program, as well as a scorecard system measuring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across cargo movements, with both initiatives being piloted by Cargo iQ Board members.

Seco-Köppen, brings over 20 years' experience in delivering process improvements and digitalization within global air freight. She joins Cargo iQ from Im3pact AG, a consultancy for

global transportation, and will take over from the current Executive Director, Lothar Moehle, a driving member of the organization since its inception 26 years ago, is retiring in June after a 50-year career in air cargo.

Seco-Köppen, who is currently the Master Operating Plan (MOP) Working Group Chair at Cargo iQ, said, "In our fragmented industry, quality standards and digitalization remain crucial to attain



Marie Seco-Koppen

increased performance visibility, which is required to remove redundancies and jointly drive-up service consistency for the shipper."



Ryan Keyrouse

Ryan Keyrouse appointed new CEO of Rotate

Ryan, one of the co-founders of Rotate, steps into this role as Gert-Jan Jansen, the outgoing CEO, will remain in the board as executive director and senior advisor for client engagements.

Since its inception in June 2022, Rotate has expanded its operations across two continents, now boasting a team of 35 professionals.

"We always envisioned a seamless transition in leadership when the time was right," says Gert-Jan. "With the remarkable growth we've experienced in just 18 months, thanks to Ryan and the larger leadership team, the time for this change is now. As co-founder, I remain committed to contributing to Rotate's continued success and am excited about the future we're shaping together."

As the newly appointed CEO, Ryan articulates his

vision for Rotate's future, stating, "Over the last two years, Rotate has established a robust foundation. The focus was on building the strongest team in air cargo for building data and software products, and expanding our capabilities with strategy consulting. Our products have garnered significant interest among our expanding customer base. Our focus now is on execution and ongoing innovation in collaboration with our partners – both those in industry and the other members of CargoTech."

Ryan brings to Rotate over two decades of industry expertise, having undertaken more than 50 air cargo strategy consulting projects across 30 countries. His career journey includes pivotal roles at Boeing and KPMG, culminating in his tenure as Managing Director at Seabury Cargo since 2010.

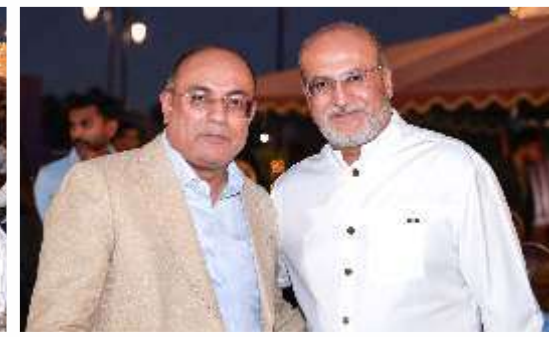
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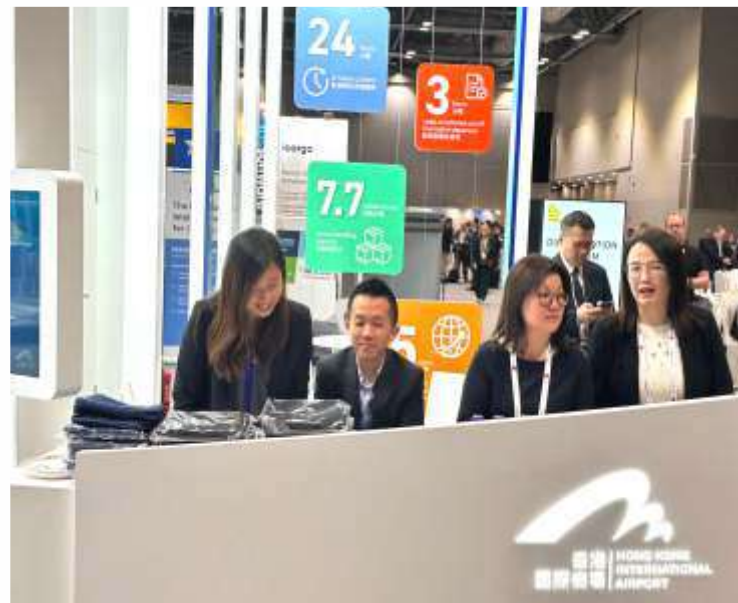
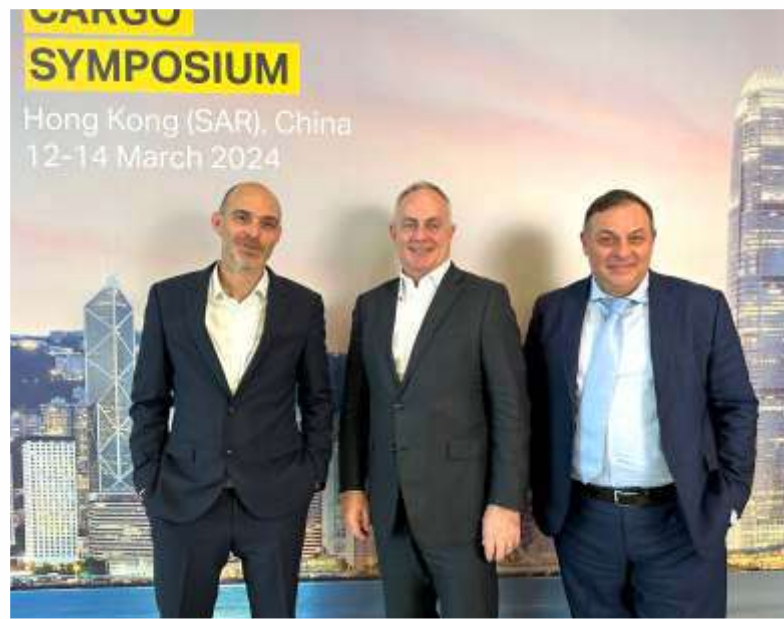


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Upcoming Events



23rd Airport Show

The 23rd Airport Show will bring together the world's leading airport suppliers and services providers, as well as aviation leaders and regional decision-makers to showcase the latest innovations and technologies in the industry. This year's theme is "Sustainability and Innovation," reflecting the industry's focus on embracing cutting-edge technology and greener initiatives to drive growth and efficiency.

With its co-located events ATC Forum, Airport Security Middle East, and the Global Airport Leaders' Forum, the unparalleled three-day event known as the Airport Show will host exhibitors from all over the world.

14-16 May 2024

Dubai World Trade Center, Dubai, UAE

EBACE 2024

The 2024 European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE2024) is Europe's premier on-demand aviation and advanced air mobility event. This is THE place where you will experience, enhance and help shape the future of business aviation.

And for the first time, EBACE will showcase leading advanced air mobility (AAM) companies both in the exhibit hall and outdoors. Join the conversation on initiatives and ideas driving sustainability, propelling the industry towards achieving the mission to net zero. Connect with companies leading the way in the future flight, showcasing a range from high-tech small aircraft to ultra-modern intercontinental jets.

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28-30, May 2024 | Geneva, Switzerland

Air Cargo China 2024

Asia's biggest air freight exhibition will be held once again at Shanghai New International Expo Center. Held for the past 12 years, next year's event is expected to be more attuned to the post-pandemic realities, with focus on both international and regional aspects. All participants can attend the event free of charge.

25-27 June 2024, Shanghai New International Expo Center, Shanghai, China

Annual General Meeting & World Air Transport Summit 2024

The 80th IATA AGM and World Air Transport Summit will take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates on 2-4 June 2024, hosted by Emirates.

This event is by invitation only. More details on the venue, registration and program will be announced soon.

02-04 June 2024 | Dubai, UAE

Volare International Airshow

AVIATION - AEROSPACE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION Volare International Airshow features a range of activities, including live demonstrations, interactive displays, technical conferences, and panel discussions. Attendees will have the opportunity to witness the capabilities of cutting-edge aircraft, experience virtual reality simulations, and explore the future of aerospace technology. Volare International Airshow will connect the global aviation & aerospace industry to Italy by providing manufacturers and suppliers a platform to showcase their products and services to a global audience. The event hosts a mix of business, general, commercial aviation, and aerospace exhibitors on a 100,000 sqm static area, accommodating more than 100 aircraft, and will include an extensive conference program featuring keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive sessions.

03-05 October, 2024, Italy

The MEBAA Show 2024

Held under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman of Dubai Airports, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group. After the success of the re-invented 2022 edition, MEBAA Show 2024 returns this December with even more business and networking opportunities. 2022 saw the launch of insightful content on the show floor through our BizAv talks, a tailored operators meeting programme, and multiple platforms for our exhibitors to meet with UHNWI highlighting synergies with luxury lifestyle and business travellers.

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