



air cargo update

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Dr. Raman Kumar
Managing Director, Al-Futtaim Logistics

Al-Futtaim Logistics Ascends to New Heights with Prestigious ASA-100 Accreditation



07 | Global News

Etihad Cargo adds Paris to freighter network with new weekly service

Airlines



24 | Features

Puerto Rico: Leading the Global Life Sciences Logistics

Airports



41 | Airports

Munich Airport welcomes its first 40 millionth passenger after the pandemic

Logistics

The Lounge

Jean Ceccaldi
CEO, ECS Group

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Monthly: VOI 15 | Issue 01 | No. 142
Middle East, Africa, Asia & beyond

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EDITORIAL

The will to remain dynamic in 2025

After navigating a complex landscape of economic and political uncertainties, evolving consumer demands, technological advancements, and other external factors, the air cargo industry may still experience a dynamic year in 2025.

While challenges remain, experts believe several key trends and unforeseen adversaries are actually turning to its favor. First, the global e-commerce sector continues to soar. With online shopping still growing exponentially, the demand for expedited shipment through air transport will continue. Retailers and consumers alike will prioritize speed and reliability, driving innovation in last-mile delivery solutions and pushing for greater efficiency in air cargo operations.

Second, regional air cargo is expected to grow amid increasing demand for faster delivery within certain regions, leading to more cost-effective transportation solutions for goods moving within and between specific geographical areas.

Third, the disruption in the maritime sector's supply chain due to conflicts in certain regions will yield to more demand for air cargo shipments.

The global trade body, International Air Transport Association, forecasts cargo revenues to reach US\$157 billion in 2025, with demand likely to grow by 6% and still well above the pre-pandemic levels.

"Freight rates (quoted in 2014 dollars/kg) are expected to be \$1.34, \$0.06 less than in 2024 and 24.4% below 2014 levels. Several trends are expected to continue to be favorable for air cargo in 2025. These include continued geopolitical uncertainty in sea shipments routed through the Suez Canal and booming e-commerce originating in Asia," IATA said in a report.

However, the industry will be forced to confront its challenges head-on. Sustainability tops the list with climate change-related problems persisting. Airlines and cargo carriers will be under increasing pressure to reduce their carbon footprint and are expected to use more sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), more efficient aircraft designs, and a greater focus on optimizing flight routes to minimize emissions.

Air cargo will also be forced to adopt more technological advancements as the world gets more immersed in the digital era. Thus, we can expect to see greater automation in systems, including in warehouses, aircraft maintenance and the use of more drones for last-mile deliveries in remote areas.

Add to that are the ongoing global economic uncertainties, coupled with geopolitical tensions. But this fair amount of trouble could yield to more creative solutions, after all, air cargo is always up for challenges. Here's to new beginnings and possibilities in 2025.

Gemma Q. Casas
Editor-in-Chief

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CONTENTS



20



06



24



34

06 **The Lounge**
‘Behind Every Good Professional, There’s a Strong Family Foundation’

20 **Cover Story**
Al-Futtaim: Ascends to New Heights in Aerospace with Prestigious ASA-100 Accreditation Logistics



09

24 **Features**
Puerto Rico: Leading the Global Life Sciences Logistics

28 **Features**
Building Smarter Skies: Digital Innovations in US Air Freight



17

34 **Trucking**
Volvo to launch this year electric truck with 600-km range



41

7 **Global News**

17 **Logistics News**

36 **Airlines**

41 **Airports**

43 **Executive Moments**

46 **Upcoming Events**

THERE WAS FORMULA 1.
UNTIL THE DAY THERE WAS Ayrton Senna.



THERE WAS REVENUE MANAGEMENT.
UNTIL THE DAY
THERE WAS ECS GROUP.

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The Lounge

‘Behind Every Good Professional, There’s a Strong Family Foundation’

The Paris-based GSSA industry global leader ECS Group surprised many in October with the appointment of Jean Ceccaldi as the Group’s new CEO.

Ceccaldi has the complete backing of the Group’s Executive Chairman Adrien Thominet who described him as the right man for the job.

“With Jean at the helm of this transformation, I am confident that ECS Group will continue to innovate and strengthen its leadership position. Our commitment to agility, sustainability, and technology will ensure we remain the trusted partner of choice for airlines and freight forwarders. Together, we are preparing ECS Group for the future and positioning ourselves to meet the challenges ahead,” Thominet said in a statement.

Ceccaldi, after all, has proven his worth, working for more than 30 years at ECS Group wearing different hats. He was the Managing Director of Aero Cargo France, ECS Group’s top-performing subsidiary prior to his appointment as the Group’s CEO.

Under his leadership, ECS Group is bound to see transformation with technology at the heart of its operations.

“I am fully committed to enhancing our technological capabilities while fostering stronger relationships with our teams and our clients. I look forward to leading this transformation in close collaboration with all MDs and key stakeholders,” said Ceccaldi.

With great interpersonal skills, Ceccaldi said his main motivation in joining the aviation industry is the way it connects people. “The main motivation remains the interaction with people. I enjoy the industry because it still allows us to connect with real individuals and provides opportunities to meet in person.”

A dynamic industry, aviation continues to evolve, something that excites Ceccaldi. “Moreover, I am increasingly convinced by the changes happening within our industry, and I am pleased to be part of this transformation. We are already witnessing, and will continue to see in the near future, these changes through the growing use of digital tools that support us,” he said.

“The challenges in our industry are numerous, and I am convinced

that the only way to overcome them is by staying very close to the market and our customers, ensuring awareness and maintaining the confidence of our principals. Beyond that, it all comes down to investment. I firmly believe that without personal commitment and dedication, success cannot be achieved,” he added.

Vast and complex, working in the aviation industry has its perks and downs. And each day comes with unexpected surprises.

So, how does one strike a work-life balance environment in aviation?

“It’s not always easy, but for me, it comes down to communication and trust. Family remains the cornerstone—there’s no doubt about it. Behind every good professional, there’s a strong family foundation. I share a lot of my professional experiences at home, and I’m not the only one in my household working in this industry. That’s definitely an advantage,” said Ceccaldi.

Apart from spending time with his family to keep his work and life happily balanced, Ceccaldi is also into sports. And when it comes to food, he delights in having Thai, Mexican or Italian dishes.

Asked about his favorite destinations, he replied, “Asia—Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore. And New Zealand.”

For those building a career in aviation and the air cargo industry, Ceccaldi has this advice, “Enjoy your career and make the best happen for yourself.”

air cargo update



Jean Ceccaldi
CEO, ECS Group

GLOBAL NEWS

Etihad Cargo adds Paris to freighter network with new weekly service



Abu Dhabi, UAE: Etihad Cargo, the cargo and logistics arm of Etihad Airways, has launched a new weekly freighter service to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) on 7 January 2025, adding over 100 tonnes of capacity and becoming the 12th destination in its freighter network.

Operating via Abu Dhabi, the new freighter service will provide seamless main deck capacity connections to Ezhou, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Hanoi and Zhengzhou. The service will also integrate with an extensive road feeder trucking network within China, enabling broader market access. Additionally, customers will benefit from same-day connectivity across Etihad Cargo’s widebody and narrowbody network, ensuring swift and reliable delivery for time-sensitive shipments.

The new Paris freighter route will support Etihad Cargo’s specialised products, meeting growing demand across multiple industries. It will provide more capacity for general cargo to destinations like Riyadh, Jakarta, and Manila, secure transport for pharmaceuticals under PharmaLife to Mumbai, Jakarta, Seoul and Sydney, and improved access for perishables through FreshForward to Kuala Lumpur, Dubai and Sharjah.

The route will also facilitate efficient solutions for live animal shipments with LiveAnimals and SkyStables, automotive shipments with FlightValet and cultural cargo with FlyCulture, offering reliable and flexible services tailored to diverse customer needs.

“Adding Paris to Etihad Cargo’s freighter network is a strategic milestone. This route expands Etihad Cargo’s European footprint and also supports the growing demand for Etihad Cargo’s specialised products across sectors, including pharmaceuticals and perishables. With the launch of the Paris service, Etihad Cargo continues to deliver tailored solutions and strengthen connectivity for partners and customers worldwide,” said Stanislas Brun, Vice President of Cargo at Etihad Cargo.

Etihad Cargo said the launch of a freighter service between Paris and Abu Dhabi demonstrates its commitment to providing reliable, customer-focused solutions.

By expanding its freighter network and optimising belly capacity on its passenger network, Etihad Cargo ensures businesses have access to efficient, seamless connections to key global markets, helping them confidently achieve their goals.



THE POWER OF DIGITAL TWINS FOR AIR CARGO

Digital twin technology offers transformative benefits for the air cargo industry by creating real-time virtual replicas of physical assets and processes. While the logistics continues to evolve, digital twins are stepping in to reshape planning and operations, providing unprecedented visibility, efficiency, and accuracy. Digital twins can replicate the entire ecosystem at airports, including aircraft, ground support equipment, and cargo flow. This enables airport authorities to simulate different scenarios, such as cargo handling, truck movements in and out of the airport and processing of critical documents.

The most interesting application of digital twin is sustainability where simulating different scenarios is possible. For example, ways to reduce fuel consumption, optimising delivery routes, and minimising carbon footprints to name a few can be simulated. Simulating disruptions such as demand supply slump, upcoming natural calamities etc. can be done seamlessly.

By integrating real-time data from IoT devices, digital twins make way for proactive management and quicker response to any disruption. Hence, they are no longer a futuristic concept but a vital tool in modern logistics. Leveraging digital twins will offer unparalleled growth opportunities for the logistics industry.



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The Donkey Sanctuary and Emirates join forces to combat trafficking of donkey skins

Dubai, UAE: The International animal welfare charity, The Donkey Sanctuary, has joined forces with Emirates, the world's largest international airline, to highlight the risks posed by the transportation of donkey skins in air cargo. Emirates has already implemented a ban on the carriage of donkey hides.

Working together they have co-created the Aviation Risk and Threat Assessment operational guide to highlight the risks posed by the donkey skin trade and its association with serious and organized criminal activity.

According to The Donkey Sanctuary's latest figures, six million donkeys are killed for their skins each year, the majority in Africa. These skins are then exported across the world, by ship and by air, before being used to make traditional medicine and remedies.

In research by The Donkey Sanctuary and the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School and Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), significant evidence exposed the link between the movement of donkey skins with other illegal wildlife trafficking and organized crime. The unregulated and unhygienic skin trade also poses a serious threat to global biosecurity.

In February this year, African Heads of State endorsed a continent-wide moratorium on the slaughter of donkeys for their skins at the 37th African Union (AU) Summit. Within days of the AU decision, Emirates extended its zero-tolerance policy on the carriage of banned species, hunting trophies and other associated products, to include donkey hides and parts.

Already a leader in efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade, the airline has established stringent protocols including screening, spot checks during transit, in depth document verification, and confirming the authenticity of permits; in addition to providing education and training for its employees across cargo and passenger operations to identify and report smuggled wildlife.

The co-created factsheet will provide the wider aviation industry with critical knowledge in the fight against the donkey skin trade. The operational guidelines explain the biosecurity risk of smuggling



inadequately processed donkey skins alongside legitimate cargo such as leather or textiles, for example. It also highlights concealment methods and crime convergence, where networks involved in the donkey skin trade may also be linked to organized crime such as wildlife and drug trafficking.

Marianne Steele, CEO of The Donkey Sanctuary, said: "This is another welcome step in the battle against the illegal trade in donkey skins within the transportation sector. All measures that shine a light on the inhumane trade in donkey skins are to be applauded, especially given its links to illegal wildlife trafficking and organised crime as well as the threat to human health for everyone involved at every stage in the process."

Robert Fordree, Senior Vice President of Cargo Operations Worldwide, Emirates SkyCargo, said: "We are proud to bring our expertise in both air logistics and the fight against illegal wildlife trafficking to the preparation of these guidelines. In close collaboration with The Donkey Sanctuary, we have highlighted some of the ways bad actors can exploit the logistics network to transport illicit goods, while also suggesting operational initiatives that can be implemented across the aviation ecosystem to stop trafficking in its tracks. Our hope is that by working with likeminded partners, we can protect the world's biodiversity for generations to come."

Animal Transportation Association Conference 2025 to be Held in Doha, Qatar

Doha, Qatar: The Animal Transportation Association (ATA) will hold its annual conference in Doha, Qatar, from 16-19 February, 2025 with Qatar Airways Cargo, the world's leading air cargo carrier, as host airline.

This prestigious event will bring together industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders from around the globe to discuss the latest advancements and best practices in the field of animal transport. Known for its commitment to animal transport welfare, excellence and innovation, Qatar Airways Cargo will play a pivotal role in facilitating the event and ensuring a seamless experience for all attendees.

The ATA Conference 2025 will feature a comprehensive program, including keynote speeches, panel discussions, and workshops. Topics will cover a wide range of issues, from animal welfare and regulatory compliance to technological innovations and sustainability in animal transport.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to network with peers and participate in exclusive tours and social events showcasing the rich culture and hospitality of Qatar.



"The globalization of markets has significantly increased the demand for animal transportation services. The ATA Conference 2025 allows members from across the globe to come together to be educated on the complex issues our industry faces," said Sean Harding, ATA president.

"We are thrilled to host the ATA Conference 2025 in Doha," said Mark Drusch, Chief Officer Cargo at Qatar Airways Cargo. "This event underscores our dedication to advancing the standards of animal transport and providing a platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration within the industry."

Registration for the ATA Conference 2025 is now open. For more information, visit the ATA website or contact Kyle Wieskus at kyle@animaltransportationassociation.org



Challenge Group introduces additional Boeing 747-400F Aircraft to its fleet



Malta: Challenge Group has unveiled its newest fleet addition—a Boeing 747-400 production freighter registered under its Belgian AOC—marking a bold milestone in its fleet expansion strategy and global mission to enhance cargo capabilities.

With this acquisition, Challenge Group’s fleet now consists of 10 state-of-the-art aircraft, including six Boeing 747-400F and four Boeing 767-300F freighters, trebling its fleet in less than 3 years. This expansion positions the company to meet increasing customer demand with greater efficiency and flexibility.

The new aircraft will significantly enhance Challenge Group’s capacity and frequency, addressing rising demand for perishable transportation out of Africa, e-commerce shipments from China, and transatlantic trade. Predominantly serving the e-commerce sector from China, the Boeing 747-400F will also support diverse industries and verticals with its versatile cargo capabilities.

“The addition of the Boeing 747-400F is a pivotal step in Challenge Group’s fleet strategy,” said Or Zak, Chief Commercial Officer at Challenge Group. “It reinforces our ability to respond to the evolving demands of the air freight capacity while expanding our capability to serve new markets. This aircraft exemplifies our commitment to operational flexibility and providing additional solutions for our customers.”

This expansion aligns with Challenge Group’s long-term strategy to grow its fleet and increase its market reach. By incorporating advanced freighters like the Boeing 747-400 production freighter, the company is well-positioned to deploy additional capacity as needed and strengthen its global network.

Challenge Group’s latest addition underscores its continued leadership in the airfreight and logistics sector, delivering tailored end-to-end logistics solutions and enabling global trade for diverse industries and verticals. The company remains dedicated to scaling its operations while maintaining the highest standards of reliability and efficiency. 🌍

WFS to open 4th cargo terminal in Copenhagen for launch of E-commerce & Freight Forwarder Handling services in Denmark



Wallenborn’s Deep Sagoo, SVP Business Development – Europe, and Peter Nygaard, Wallenborn MD Scandinavia, with Jimi Daniel Hansen, WFS Interim Managing Director Denmark & Senior Vice President Operational Excellence.

Copenhagen/Singapore: Worldwide Flight Services (WFS), a SATS company, is to open a fourth warehouse facility at Copenhagen Airport to support the expansion of its specialized E-commerce & Freight Forwarder Handling (EFFH) services in Scandinavia.

WFS has also announced it will take over the existing customer portfolio from Wallenborn Outsourcing in Copenhagen from Wallenborn Transports, one of Europe’s largest air-cargo road feeder services (RFS) operators, on 1 March 2025.

The EFFH services will initially be managed at the Danish airport

in a 2,500m² facility located at Kystvejen 24 and, from next summer, move into the newly-refurbished 4,800m² warehouse at Kystvejen 28.

The new 4,800m² facility reinforces WFS’ strong commitment to customers in Copenhagen and its position as the airport’s largest air cargo handling provider. Since opening its first warehouse operation in 2006, WFS has added two further purpose-built facilities as well as a dedicated GDP-certified pharma facility to support the cluster of life science companies in the Greater Copenhagen area. It now provides handling services for over 50 airline customers in Copenhagen.

The launch of EFFH services in Copenhagen will expand WFS’ operations to include value added solutions. More services will be added later.

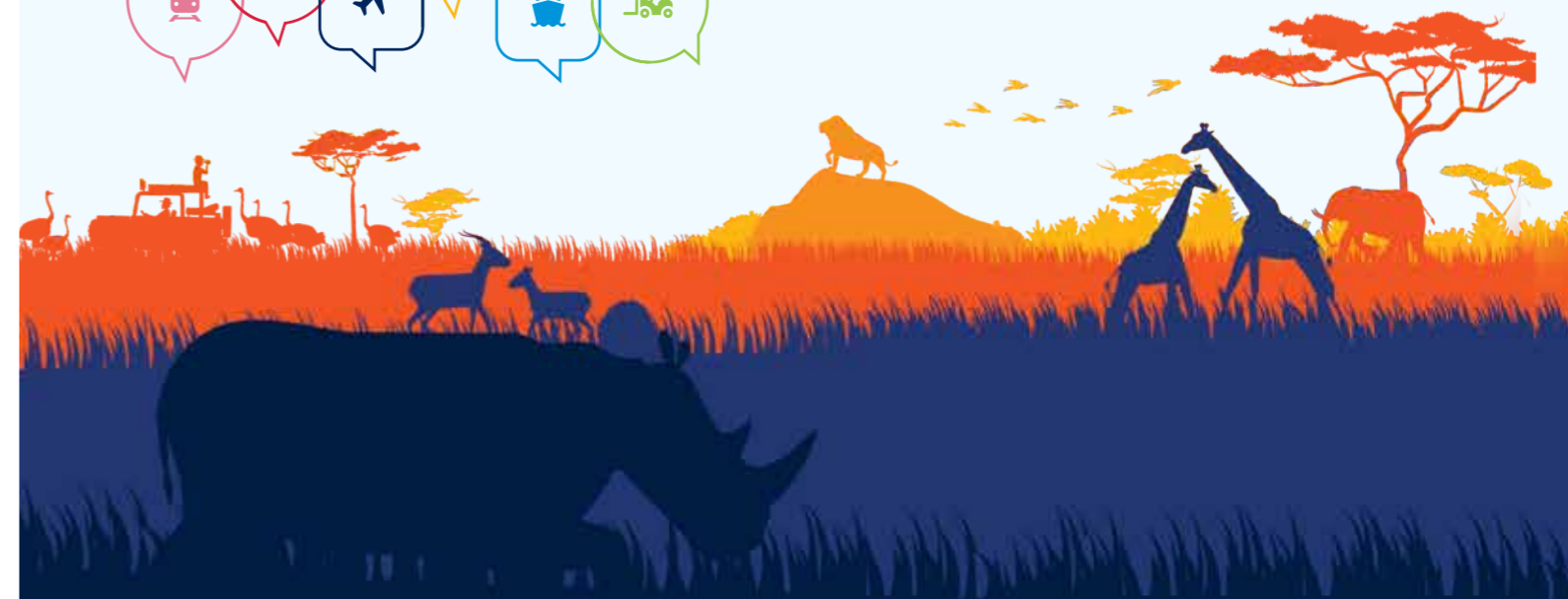
“We’re excited to announce the sale of Wallenborn Outsourcing, which we founded back in 2016, to WFS. This marks a significant step for our concept and sets the stage for even more growth in the Danish logistics space. WFS shares our vision for developing the Outsourcing concept, and we’re confident that WFS will unlock new opportunities and drive innovation. A huge thank you to our amazing team, loyal customers, and partners for their support over the years. A special thank you to Henrik Melbye for his invaluable support and contributions throughout our journey. We’re excited about the future and the opportunities ahead,” said Peter Nygaard, Wallenborn MD Scandinavia.

“Our large customer base in Copenhagen and the wider freight forwarding community in Denmark present significant opportunities to establish and grow WFS’ E-commerce & Freight Forwarder Handling services. We expect a high level of further interest from other existing and new customers looking to outsource these types of services to an experienced partner with a proven track record of delivering EFFH solutions at major airports,” said Jimi Daniel Hansen, WFS Interim Managing Director Denmark & Senior Vice President Operational Excellence.

WFS currently offers EFFH services to customers at eight other airport stations in Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin, Liege, London Heathrow, Madrid, Paris CDG, and Stockholm Arlanda. 🌍

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SAVE THE DATE

The IATA World Cargo Symposium, the largest and most prestigious air cargo annual event, comes back in Dubai, UAE, in April 2025.

The 2024 edition brought close to 2'000 delegates to Hong Kong (SAR), China. The next WCS will continue offering plenary sessions, specialized streams, workshops, and executive summits tackling aspects related to technology, innovation, security, customs, cargo operations, and sustainability.

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GLOBAL NEWS

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American Airlines Cargo enhances operations at London Heathrow



Fort Worth, Texas: American Airlines Cargo made a large-scale enhancement in its facility and digital capabilities at London Heathrow Airport (LHR), its largest operation in Europe.

The carrier has made an extensive facility expansion at LHR by moving to a new location. The move, adjacent to its two former buildings, combines the carrier's operations into one larger footprint for both imports and exports. The new

facility provides more space and enables greater flexibility for the carrier and its cargo handler, Worldwide Flight Services (WFS).

The new building offers a total of 120,000 square feet, a 15,000 square foot increase compared to the original combined facilities and nearly doubles the capacity for storage of PMC pallets. Landside and airside doors, X-Ray machines and build stations also all increase at the new building – all of which enable faster acceptance and delivery as well as build-up and break-down efforts.

In addition to the facility move, American has also updated how it transmits operational updates digitally with WFS. The combined effort enables a new digital connection between the WFS system, CargoSpot, and American's iCargo platform.

"The facility expansion is a significant milestone for us in how we operate in LHR" says Sam Mendenhall, VP of Operations for American Airlines Cargo. "We are confident that the move to a larger, more uniform cargo facility, coupled with the technology enhancements with WFS, will unlock operational efficiencies and ultimately provide a better experience for our customers who ship in and out of LHR."

American currently operates 20 widebody flights a day out of LHR to key hubs in the U.S., with as many as 26 per day during the summer peak season. 🌐

New ocean and air freight data reveals major shifts in global trade routes

TOP 5 AIR FREIGHT ROUTES (Q4 2024) By weekly cargo tonnage: Chicago O'Hare ↔ Anchorage

Haneda ↔ Fukuoka (Japan); New Chitose ↔ Haneda (Japan); Hong Kong ↔ Anchorage, and; Gimpo ↔ Jeju (South Korea)

TOP 5 MARITIME TRADE LANES (Q4 2024) By TEU capacity: Asia – Europe; Asia - North America; Asia - West Coast South America; Far East - Middle East, and; Intra-regional - Far East

Melbourne, Australia: Major disruptions in the Red Sea have triggered one of the largest realignments of global shipping routes in recent years, with Asia-Europe maritime capacity plunging by 33% from 2023 to 2024, according to new data from routing solutions provider Fluent Cargo.

The analysis reveals widespread changes across global trade corridors. Despite capacity reductions, the Asia-Europe corridor remains the world's busiest maritime route, followed by Asia-North America.

"The massive rerouting we're seeing around the Red Sea highlights why unified data is critical," said Andrew Greig, Fluent Cargo CTO. "When disruptions occur, organizations need a single source of truth about alternative routes, real-time tracking, and capacity impacts. More organizations are needing to consolidate essential data in order to quickly identify and execute the most efficient alternative routes."

In air freight, the Chicago O'Hare-Anchorage corridor leads global routes with 25,317 tons weekly capacity, highlighting Anchorage's crucial role as North America's primary transpacific cargo hub.

Key findings include:

- ▶ Asia-West Africa trade dropping from 6th to 11th place as vessels reroute around Africa
- ▶ Rise in regional shipping networks, particularly in Asia
- ▶ Strategic capacity reductions across all major maritime routes
- ▶ Strong domestic air freight corridors in Japan and South Korea

"These shifts in global trade patterns demonstrate why static routing strategies are no longer viable," said Archival Garcia, Fluent Cargo CEO. "Shippers are being forced to adapt quickly to disruptions and increasingly need to make data-driven decisions about their cargo movements. Shipping rates and share prices are being driven down by decreased global demand. The post-Covid recovery volumes are gone and customers are frustrated with lack of information and uncertain costs. The election of Donald Trump to the US presidency will further affect trade."

These data insights come as Fluent Cargo expands its routing solutions with a recently launched multimodal tracking service. The company has also established new partnerships with DP World and Hellmann Worldwide Logistics. 🌐





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Emirates SkyCargo adds Copenhagen to its dedicated freighter network



Copenhagen, Denmark: In response to growing demand out of Denmark, Emirates SkyCargo, the cargo division of the world's largest international airline, Emirates, has deployed a dedicated weekly freighter to Copenhagen Airport, increasing their freighter network destinations to 38.

Previously served via belly-hold capacity in passenger aircraft, the Boeing 777 freighter will increase capacity offered to Emirates' customers, with approximately 85 tons allocated for cargo from Copenhagen, and neighboring countries including Norway and Sweden.

Emirates SkyCargo has recorded significant growth in volume of over 20% from Denmark in the last financial year, driven largely by pharmaceutical shipments. With a thriving life sciences production industry and resilient cold chain infrastructure,

Copenhagen serves as Europe's northern hub for pharma logistics.

The increased capacity coupled with Emirates SkyCargo's fit-for-purpose pharmaceutical product portfolio and extensive global network will support more pharma exports from Denmark.

In addition to uplifting pharmaceutical cargo, Emirates SkyCargo will provide tailored solutions to transport goods via its multi-vertical product portfolio. From general cargo to temperature-sensitive perishables such as fish and other foods, the airline keeps goods moving from Copenhagen to the world, swiftly, efficiently and reliably.

Mette Jensen, Cargo Manager for Scandinavia, Emirates SkyCargo said, "Demand has been strong across Scandinavia, with particular growth in Copenhagen, and we expect this to continue into the next financial year and beyond. Bolstering our operations to Copenhagen with a dedicated freighter, ensures that we are able to serve the current demand, and support our customers in reaching a large number of markets across the globe."

Emirates SkyCargo serves 11 destinations across Europe with 38 dedicated freighter flights per week, complemented by over 485 passenger flights every week. This near-unrivalled frequency and capacity marks Europe as one of the airline's busiest destinations.

Aramex slashes customs processing time by half through revolutionary partnership with Dubai Customs



Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Aramex, the leading global provider of comprehensive logistics and transportation solutions, says its operational efficiency significantly increased with the implementation of the innovative Seamless Inspections initiative by Dubai's Ports, Customs, and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC).

The program, which stations customs officers directly at Aramex warehouses, has reduced shipment processing times by more than 50% and achieved time savings of approximately five hours per shipment.

The implementation of on-site customs clearance has enhanced Aramex's operational efficiency. With customs inspectors stationed at Aramex warehouses, shipments now receive immediate clearance upon arrival, reducing the need for traditional inspection points at customs centers and delays associated with off-site inspections. Aramex can thus maintain tight control over workflows, optimize storage and distribution, and offer customers faster shipping

solutions.

Aramex's partnership with Dubai Customs is a collaboration that fosters trust, transparency, and efficiency for all stakeholders. The Seamless Inspections initiative enhances supply chain predictability while significantly reducing handling risks through optimized workflows.

The impact is particularly noticeable in delivery schedules, with both B2B and B2C customers experiencing faster, more reliable service delivery timeframes. Businesses can thus meet global demand with greater agility and more resilient supply chains, positioning Dubai at the forefront of global trade hubs.

"The Seamless Inspections initiative is a testament to Dubai Customs' dedication to pioneering comprehensive and efficient customs processes; made possible by visionary leadership and commitment to innovation. Aramex looks forward to continuing our collaboration with Dubai Customs and other strategic partners to further enhance supply chain management and operational efficiency. Together, we are paving the way for sustainable development and attracting new foreign investments, reinforcing Dubai's global standing in trade and logistics," said Khaled Ziad Al-Kilani, Senior Director at Aramex's Regional Office.

The success of this initiative at Aramex's facilities demonstrates the potential for similar improvements across Dubai's logistics sector, supporting the emirate's vision of becoming a leading global trade hub.

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Emirates Transport partners with Motoboy to Advance Green Logistics

Dubai, UAE: Emirates Transport (ET) has entered into a landmark four-year lease agreement with Motoboy Delivery Services to introduce zero-emission, 100% electric delivery bikes into Motoboy's third-party logistics fleet.

The UAE's premier transport and logistics provider said the initiative is a testament to both organizations' commitment to supporting the UAE's Green Agenda 2030 and redefining logistics standards in the region.

Emirates Transport, a pioneer in green initiatives, has consistently championed



alternative energy solutions and fleet optimization strategies to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact.

The partnership will initially deploy 40 electric bikes, underscoring a shared mission to minimize ecological footprints while enhancing operational efficiency. This step represents a forward-thinking approach to logistics, combining environmental responsibility with cutting-edge innovation.

"By introducing electric bikes into our operations, we aim to enhance last-mile delivery efficiency while actively contributing to the UAE's ambitious sustainability vision. This partnership aligns with our shared responsibility to reduce environmental impact and deliver smarter, cleaner mobility solutions that resonate with the evolving needs of businesses and communities across the nation," explains Dominic Hagerty, Chief Transport and Leasing Officer at Emirates Transport.

Motoboy is renowned for its customer-centric approach and advanced delivery solutions.

"This partnership with Emirates Transport marks a significant step in our commitment to sustainable innovation," said Mr. Farid Fawaz Dallal, CEO of Motoboy. "By integrating electric bikes into our operations, we are enhancing delivery efficiency while actively supporting the UAE's sustainability goals. Together, we are shaping a greener, more resilient logistics network that aligns with the nation's vision for a sustainable future."

Gebrüder Weiss supports Uganda aid project

Lauterach, Austria: Catholic missionary Erich Fischnaller is doing important development and construction work in the Palorinya refugee settlement in northern Uganda.

This includes providing young people with the education to build an independent existence. With the support of many people, he has set up several training workshops where people can learn trades such as carpentry, metalwork and baking.

Until now, the workshops were powered by old diesel generators – an expensive and environmentally unfriendly solution. This is now changing. Photovoltaic system manufacturers and electrical engineering companies from Vorarlberg and Liechtenstein have donated all the components needed for a high-performance photovoltaic system (PV). It can be operated without being connected to the public power grid (off-grid) and generates up to 200 kilowatts of electrical energy.

The global logistics company Gebrüder Weiss is responsible for transporting the solar system to Uganda.

"This is an exemplary initiative by companies in the region that helps to give the local population a perspective for the future – and it also makes ecological sense. Solar energy instead of fossil fuels: a sustainable aid project that we are happy to support," says Andreas Bilgeri, Manager of Gebrüder Weiss Air & Sea Wolfurt.

The solar energy system was packed into a 40-foot sea freight container and sent away before Christmas. It first traveled by rail from Wolfurt to Rotterdam and then by ship to Mombasa (Kenya). The rest of the journey to Uganda was by truck.



"I am pleased to partner with Gebrüder Weiss, a globally experienced logistics company based in Vorarlberg. Their expertise streamlines our coordination processes and ensures the solar system will arrive safely and on schedule," says Matthias Burtcher, coordinator of the aid campaign. With the support of many volunteers, the donated PV system modules were assembled, tested and packed at his company's premises before being transported.

The "Solar Power for Palorinya" is a joint project of the Catholic missionary order of the Comboni Missionaries – represented locally by Brother Erich Fischnaller – and numerous companies, associations and individuals from Vorarlberg, Liechtenstein and South Tyrol.

Fischnaller, who was born in South Tyrol and began his missionary work in Africa 50 years ago, has been involved in the Palorinya refugee center since 2016. More than 125,000 people live there, most of whom have fled the civil war in neighboring Sudan.



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LOGISTICS NEWS

Dubai approves drone delivery logistics within a special zone, the first in the Middle East

Dubai, UAE: The futuristic city of Dubai approved in December the use of drone for delivery services within Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), the special economic zone for knowledge and innovation and a member of the Dubai Integrated Economic Zones.

The Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA) granted Keeta Drone, a subsidiary of the Chinese technology and retail company Meituan, the license to operate six drones at DSO to deliver food, pharmaceuticals like medicines and other essentials.

DCAA says this is just the first phase of the Dubai government's long-term plan to utilize drones for urban logistics. By 2030, about 33 percent of Dubai is foreseen to use more drones for deliveries.

HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the UAE, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai Future Foundation (DFF), was the first person to test the drone delivery service by placing an order through a platform. The order was successfully delivered from one of the take-off points within DSO, the Rochester Institute of Technology-Dubai.

Sheikh Hamdan reaffirmed Dubai's commitment to developing advanced infrastructure and fostering an innovative environment to enhance smart logistics and cutting-edge air transport solutions, aligned with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to establish Dubai as a leader among future-ready cities.

"Over the past years, we have launched a series of programs in Dubai aimed at promoting the development of smart city solutions, enhancing economic integration between various sectors, and employing technology in the service of society, such as the Dubai Program to Enable Drone Transportation, the Dubai Robotics and Automation Programme, the Dubai Research and Development Program, and Dubai's annual plan to accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence. Today, we are reaping the impressive results of these initiatives and continuing the transformational projects that will double the size of Dubai's economy by 2033," said Sheikh Hamdan

Adding, "The future of robotic technologies and self-driving systems for retail services, and knowledge-based economic applications, innovation, digital transformation and the use of artificial intelligence have all become a reality in Dubai."

Mohammed Abdullah Linjawi, Director General of DCAA, said, "Drone delivery will reach 33% of Dubai by 2030, positioning the emirate as a pioneer in smart mobility. We will continue our pioneering role in creating new opportunities by regulating and operating drones and paving the way for the introduction of various emerging and promising technologies in the field of aviation in cooperation with government and private entities, and applying the best international practices to ensure the safety of air operations and using the latest technologies to enhance the efficiency of advanced logistics services."

Redefining urban logistics

Keeta Drone's M-Drone Gen 3, a six-rotor drone with a maximum load capacity of 2.3kg, is at the forefront of DSO's drone delivery network. Combined with a proprietary intelligent dispatch system and automated ground infrastructure,



HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the UAE, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai Future Foundation



the drones provide safe, reliable, and efficient logistics solutions tailored for urban environments.

Dr. Yinian Mao, Vice President of Meituan and President of Keeta Drone, remarked: "The UAE's progressive policies and robust support for technological innovation have played a pivotal role in enabling our operations here. Dubai's high demand for on-demand delivery services and the operational challenges posed by its extreme weather underscore the potential for drone delivery to enhance efficiency and reliability. We are confident that Keeta Drone's services will redefine urban logistics, improving both customer experiences and industry resilience."

Meituan was founded in Beijing in 2010 to champion digital innovation in retail, working with partners to deliver high-quality consumer services, with on-demand delivery as a core offering.

The company began exploring drones for seamless air-ground local deliveries in 2017 and launched its first commercial delivery service in Shenzhen, China in 2021.

As of December 2024, Keeta Drone operates 53 routes in major Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, having completed over 400,000 deliveries. The service spans a variety of locations—offices, residential areas, tourist spots, parks, campuses, and libraries—offering customers a selection of over 90,000 products.

With the help of cutting-edge flight control algorithms and multi-sensor fusion positioning technology, the drone is designed to operate in various city landscapes. It is equipped with low-noise propellers, a parachute, and a flight control system, all developed in-house.



Al-Futtaim Logistics

Ascends to New Heights in Aerospace with Prestigious ASA-100 Accreditation

By Poonam Chawla

In an era marked by rapid transformation in the logistics sector, Al-Futtaim Logistics has emerged as a pioneer of innovation and sustainability.

In an exclusive dialogue with Air Cargo Update's Associate Publisher, Poonam Chawla, Dr. Raman Kumar, the pioneering Managing Director of Al-Futtaim Logistics, reveals the company's groundbreaking strategies and its ascent to the zenith of industry excellence.

As the MENA region catapults onto the global stage as a pivotal player in air cargo, Dr. Kumar's insights offer a captivating glimpse into the future of logistics.

From cutting-edge 5G tracking systems to AI-powered document processing, Al-Futtaim Logistics is harnessing state-of-the-art technology to navigate the complexities of a post-pandemic world.

Dr. Raman Kumar
Managing Director, Al-Futtaim Logistics

Photos By: Deepu Raj

New Markets For Aerospace

How is the MENA region emerging as a key player in the global air cargo industry?

The air cargo industry is at a transformative juncture. Digitalization, e-commerce and sustainability will remain pivotal in shaping its future. Companies that embrace these trends and invest in innovative solutions will lead the way.

The MENA and Indian Sub continent region is on the cusp of becoming the epicenter of global air operations. Airlines like Emirates, Qatar Airways and Saudia Cargo are driving this growth, supported by the region's strategic location.

The geographical advantage allows for swift connections between Asia, Europe and the Americas. Goods often transition from sea to air in this region, facilitating rapid delivery to destinations worldwide. For example, Saudi Arabia's central position enables quick deliveries to key markets within hours.

Visions like Saudi 2030 and the UAE's development plans underscore the region's potential. With strategic investments and advancements, the MENA region is poised for remarkable growth in the air cargo sector.

In 2025, we are expanding our aerospace logistics services to KSA, Kuwait and Oman and will be offering customers time critical freight and local services solutions.

Over time, we have gained momentum through client recommendations. The services we will extend in these new markets includes freight solutions for AOGs, time critical parts from MROs, airlines and part suppliers, overcoming uncertainties and designing custom solutions to respond to the aerospace client's pain points.

Al-Futtaim Logistics, being part of one of the largest automotive conglomerates in the UAE – Al-Futtaim Automotive, is poised to spearhead this charge into a more interconnected, efficient and sustainable future.

Secure Aerospace Logistics

Dr. Kumar, Al-Futtaim Logistics has recently secured the prestigious ASA-100 accreditation. Can you elaborate on the significance of this achievement?

Securing the ASA-100 accreditation is nothing short of a prestigious moment for Al-Futtaim Logistics. This accolade propels us into an elite echelon, as one of only five 3PL companies globally to hold this esteemed accreditation. It's not merely a feather in our cap; it's a resounding affirmation of our unwavering commitment to excellence in freight handling and security standards in aerospace logistics.

Al-Futtaim Logistics' compliance with ASA-100 standards includes meticulous documentation control to ensure traceability and accountability for all aircraft parts.

Rigorous inspections are conducted on inbound and outbound shipments to identify and address any hazardous materials, suspected unapproved parts, or counterfeit components. When such items are detected, Al-Futtaim Logistics swiftly notifies clients and implements quarantine and segregation procedures to maintain safety and quality standards.



How will this accreditation impact your clientele and operational paradigm?

For our customers, it means they can trust us to handle their freight with utmost care and precision, especially when it comes to safety of parts and products. This certification ensures that we meet and exceed industry standards, providing our clients with peace of mind and reliable service. It instills an unprecedented level of confidence in our ability to handle cargo with surgical precision and utmost care. This isn't just a seal of approval; it's an ironclad guarantee of reliability and excellence, equipping us to tackle the most formidable logistics challenges.

In what ways does the ASA-100 accreditation align with Al-Futtaim Logistics' overarching strategy?

The ASA-100 accreditation serves as the cornerstone of our forward-thinking strategy.

In the dynamic realm of logistics, stagnation is tantamount to regression. This certification acts as a springboard for perpetual innovation. We are not content with merely maintaining standards; we are committed to continually raising the bar. Our goal isn't just to participate in the logistics industry; it's to reshape its very foundations.

Last Mile E-Commerce

How have customer expectations and logistics evolved in e-commerce over the last five years?

E-commerce has undergone a rapid transformation. What previously took decades to develop now evolves within a few years. If companies fail to adapt swiftly, competitors will overtake them.

Think about how straightforward it is to order items from anywhere in the world and receive them within a week, something that was unimaginable just a few years back. Today, this has become the norm, all thanks to improvements in last-



mile logistics.

The global e-commerce companies have set new benchmarks by transitioning from e-commerce to becoming global logistics leaders. Their efficiency in digitalization and innovation has become a model for others. At Al-Futtaim Logistics, we have introduced AI-driven solutions that automate document scanning and data extraction, reducing processing time from hours to minutes.

Last-mile delivery has also expanded from ground-based solutions to aerial logistics, showcasing the industry's readiness to embrace innovation.

What role does collaboration play in shaping the future of the e-commerce industry?

Collaboration is essential for driving innovation in e-commerce. While e-commerce will coexist with traditional courier and logistics businesses, there will be a shift in balance. Traditional methods won't disappear, as services like urgent shipments and fuel transport remain essential. Instead, the focus should be on fostering healthy competition and leveraging each company's strengths to propel the industry forward.

Environmentally Conscious 3PL

Could you elaborate on Al-Futtaim Logistics team's sustainability initiatives?

Sustainability is a cornerstone of our operations, aligning with the UAE's net-zero emissions goal by 2050 and Al-Futtaim's internal targets. We address sustainability through controllable and non-controllable factors. For instance, while we rely on shipping partners for fuel emissions, we actively manage our fleet operations.

Our initiatives include transitioning vehicles to biofuels like B5 and B100. The latter uses sustainably sourced raw materials, significantly improving our net-zero score. Additionally, we have incorporated **electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrid trucks into our fleet to further reduce emissions.**

To validate these efforts, we have partnered with Green Freight Asia for sustainability audits. After a rigorous three-year process, we are nearing the highest possible sustainability score. These efforts reflect our commitment to regulatory requirements and actionable sustainability targets.

Digitalization

How is Digitalization transforming the cargo industry?

Digitalization is streamlining operations and reducing manual processes in the cargo industry. We at Al-Futtaim Logistics have implemented digital initiatives like Yard Management System for better automotive logistics operations, leading to increased productivity. The adoption of digital technologies has enabled real-time ocean container tracking and improved communication between stakeholders in the supply chain.

Digital solutions are providing better visibility across the supply chain. Freight forwarders can now collect and analyze vast amounts of data about shipments, carriers and markets, leading to better decision-making in pricing, routing and risk management. Al-Futtaim Logistics has deployed new technologies in their systems for contract logistics, general transport and last-mile deliveries, increasing transparency in the entire supply chain.

The industry is moving towards paperless operations, with innovations like the electronic Bill of Lading (e-BoL) reducing administrative burdens, eliminating manual errors and accelerating the documentation process.

Digitalization is enabling freight forwarders to provide better customer service. Al-Futtaim Logistics' e-commerce logistics platform offers last-mile delivery, assembly services and shipment tracking, prioritizing customer convenience.

What are the key challenges in the implementation of Digitalization?

One of the biggest challenges is the lack of standardization across the industry, making it difficult for businesses to exchange information and connect electronically. There is also a lack of integration between different software systems, hindering a complete view of the supply chain.



Implementing digital solutions requires significant investment in time and money, which can be a barrier for small and medium-sized businesses.

The industry needs to adapt to and effectively utilize new technologies. This includes training staff and updating existing systems to work with new digital solutions.

With increased digitalization comes the need for robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data and ensure compliance with privacy regulations.

While digitalization presents challenges, Al-Futtaim Logistics is embracing these changes to improve its operations and service offerings. The industry as a whole is moving towards a more digitized future, with the potential for significant improvements in efficiency, visibility and customer satisfaction.

The logistics landscape is undergoing a seismic shift. How is Al-Futtaim Logistics staying ahead of the curve?

The world has significantly changed, especially after COVID, emphasizing the importance of adopting digital solutions. Consumers now demand instant availability of goods, whether

essential items or aerospace components, pushing for seamless logistics.

In aviation, supply chain efficiency has become critical. We are not merely adapting to change; we are orchestrating it.

Our advanced 5G-compatible tracking systems and AI-driven document processing are revolutionizing our modus operandi.

We are transmuting raw data into actionable insights, slashing processing times from hours to mere minutes. This digital metamorphosis isn't just about enhancing efficiency; it's about redefining the boundaries of possibility in logistics.

What has been the biggest impact of digitalization on your operational ecosystem?

Digitalization has impacted us in many ways. First, it has increased operational costs. However, this is offset by improved resource planning and operational efficiency. Integrated systems ensure seamless data flow without manual intervention, streamlining the supply chain for customers and us.

About Aerospace Logistics at Al-Futtaim Logistics

- ▶▶ Headquartered in the UAE
- ▶▶ Established in 1980
- ▶▶ Airside operations in major UAE airports
- ▶▶ 24 x 7 AOG operations
- ▶▶ ASA-100 accredited 3PL services
- ▶▶ 65+ aerospace network member and 300+ stations
- ▶▶ Own aerospace logistics operations in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman by 2025
- ▶▶ Centralized aerospace services, with global coverage and dynamic freight, haulage and storage solutions
- ▶▶ Technicians Onboard Charters (TOC)
- ▶▶ Winner of Emerging Aerospace Logistics award

For more information on services, please send email to contact@aflogistics.com



Puerto Rico: Leading the Global Life Sciences Logistics

By Ayesha Rashid



Under the visionary leadership of Varlín Vissepó, the Director of the Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community, Puerto Rico has become the premier hub for life sciences exports. Leveraging advanced air cargo logistics, climate-controlled warehousing, and strategic global connections, the island ensures the efficient and reliable distribution of critical healthcare products worldwide, solidifying its reputation as “the medicine cabinet of the world.”

In our ever-evolving world, healthcare logistics is more important than ever. It’s the backbone that ensures life-saving medications, medical devices and essential supplies get where they need to be, safely and on time.

Meet Varlín Vissepó, the Director of the Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community. With extensive experience in logistics and a keen understanding of the life sciences sector, Vissepó is leading the charge in transforming how healthcare products are transported.

Under his guidance, the Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community has become a hub of innovation, using the latest technology and strategic partnerships to streamline supply chains and improve reliability.

Vissepó believes in the power of agility and resilience, especially when facing global challenges like pandemics and natural disasters.

Vissepó speaks with Air Cargo Update on this matter.

Market Size

The global healthcare logistics market is experiencing significant growth, valued at USD 184.43 billion in 2023 and projected to reach USD 340.63 billion by 2032, with a CAGR of 7.61% (Straits Research).

This growth is driven by the increasing demand for pharmaceuticals and medical devices, as companies expand their product lines to meet evolving market needs. The rise in chronic diseases, especially in rural areas, has heightened the need for advanced healthcare products and services, necessitating the safe delivery of these items. Additionally, the demand for temperature-controlled logistics is rising due to innovative therapies requiring cold chain solutions.

FEATURES



Varlín Vissepó
Director of the Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community

Puerto Rico’s Healthcare Exports on the Rise

Puerto Rico’s healthcare export sector has seen a significant boost, with an 8 percent rise in exports, now totaling approximately \$60 billion. This growth is largely driven by high-demand products such as biologics, which require strict Good Distribution Practices (GDP), meticulous handling, and controlled transportation conditions.

“Puerto Rico is particularly equipped to manage these stringent requirements,” says Vissepó.

In addition to biologics, the island is also seeing growth in exports of specialized pharmaceuticals, advanced medical devices, and cutting-edge gene and cell therapies.

“Our robust cold chain logistics and air cargo infrastructure ensure that these sensitive products reach global markets efficiently and in prime condition,” Vissepó explains.

This infrastructure is crucial for maintaining the quality and efficacy of these products during transit.

The expansion of direct air routes has been instrumental in supporting this growth. “Timely deliveries are essential for maintaining the integrity and efficacy of these crucial products,” Vissepó notes, highlighting how the increased connectivity allows Puerto Rico to meet the demands of the global healthcare market effectively. This strategic advantage reinforces the island’s position as a key player in the international healthcare logistics landscape.

Expanded Air Cargo Routes Boost Distribution

The recent expansion of air cargo capacity, especially towards Europe and South America, has significantly impacted the distribution of life sciences products from Puerto Rico. This enhanced capacity has shortened transit times, which is crucial for temperature-sensitive products like vaccines and biologics that have limited shelf lives.

“Shorter transit times mean that our products maintain their efficacy and reach markets more efficiently.”

By opening direct routes to emerging markets in South America and strengthening connections with European and Asian destinations, Puerto Rican companies can now deliver their products faster and more reliably. This improvement not only enhances Puerto Rico’s competitive edge but also broadens its reach in the global healthcare market.

“Direct routes eliminate unnecessary stops and potential delays, ensuring that our sensitive medical products arrive in optimal condition,” Vissepó explains.

The expansion of air cargo capacity has allowed Puerto Rico to better serve its international partners, providing timely deliveries that are essential in the healthcare sector.

“Our increased connectivity to key markets ensures that we can meet the growing demands of the global healthcare industry.”

As a result, Puerto Rico continues to solidify its role as a pivotal hub in the life sciences supply chain, ensuring that life-saving products are distributed efficiently worldwide.

Strategic Geographic Location

Puerto Rico’s prime geographic position offers life sciences companies unparalleled access to key markets in the United States and Latin America. This strategic location enables swift and efficient distribution, minimizing transit times and reducing logistical complexities. “Being centrally located allows us to serve major markets with ease, ensuring that our clients can reach their destinations quickly and reliably.”

In addition to its proximity to the Americas, Puerto Rico has established direct air routes to Europe, providing competitive transit times that are essential for time-sensitive medical products.

Regionally, North America leads the market, driven by an aging population and increasing chronic disease prevalence, which boosts demand for secure transport of medical products.

The U.S. is a major exporter of medical products, further supporting market growth. In Europe, the market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.33%, with healthcare operations focusing on value-based care and regulatory compliance. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of a resilient supply chain, prompting European healthcare providers to ensure a steady supply of essential medical goods, thereby driving regional market expansion.

‘The Medicine Cabinet of the World’

Puerto Rico’s impressive growth in the life sciences sector has firmly established the island as the largest biopharmaceutical exporter among all U.S. jurisdictions, with exports reaching over 120 countries. This achievement has earned Puerto Rico the nickname “the medicine cabinet of the world.”

Vissepó, highlights this success: “Our island’s ability to manage complex logistics operations, particularly in the pharmaceutical and medical sectors, is a testament to our expertise and dedication.”

The expansion of Puerto Rico’s life sciences industry has underscored its capability to handle intricate logistics, especially in distributing pharmaceutical and medical products via air cargo. “We adhere to the most stringent Good Distribution Practices (GDP),” Vissepó notes, emphasizing the island’s commitment to maintaining high standards in logistics operations.

“With the increase in both the volume and frequency of cargo flights, Puerto Rico has become a crucial junction in the global supply chain.

“Our strategic location and robust infrastructure have reinforced our reputation not just as a production center, but as a pivotal hub in healthcare logistics,” Vissepó explains.

This strategic positioning allows Puerto Rico to play a vital role in ensuring the efficient and reliable distribution of healthcare products worldwide, further solidifying its status as a leader in the industry.



These direct connections help life sciences companies maintain the integrity of their products during transit.

"Our direct flights to Europe eliminate unnecessary stops, ensuring that sensitive pharmaceuticals and medical devices arrive in optimal condition."

Advanced Cargo Facilities and Cold Chain Infrastructure

Puerto Rico boasts specialized air cargo facilities equipped with the latest technology for temperature control and security.

"Our state-of-the-art cold chain infrastructure is designed to handle even the most sensitive products, guaranteeing that they reach their destinations in pristine condition," Vissepó highlights.

With over 60 years of manufacturing experience, Puerto Rico meets the highest FDA and EMA regulatory standards. This long-standing expertise provides life sciences companies with confidence that their products are handled with the utmost quality and compliance.

"Our rich history in manufacturing and strict adherence to FDA and EMA standards make Puerto Rico a trusted partner for life sciences exports."

Logistical Expertise and Reliable Support

Puerto Rico's sophisticated logistical network and expert workforce ensure seamless export processes for life sciences companies. From packaging to transportation, every step is managed with precision to meet the unique demands of the healthcare industry.

"Our logistical expertise and comprehensive support services enable companies to focus on innovation while we handle the complexities of their supply chain," Vissepó adds.

Advancements in air cargo logistics have been pivotal to the remarkable growth and success of Puerto Rico's life sciences industry, which now accounts for 70% of the island's exports and contributes 35% to its GDP.

These innovations have enabled Puerto Rican companies to meet the stringent demands of the global market, particularly for high-stakes products like biologics.

"Integrating real-time monitoring technologies has revolutionized how we manage and track our shipments.

"With real-time data, we can ensure that temperature-sensitive products remain within required conditions throughout their journey, minimizing the risk of spoilage and maintaining their efficacy."

The adoption of IATA's CEIV (Certified Evaluation Inspection Verification) cold chain management standards has further enhanced Puerto Rico's logistical capabilities.

"Achieving CEIV certification was a game-changer for us," Vissepó notes. "It not only signifies our commitment to maintaining the highest standards in temperature-controlled logistics but also instills confidence in our global partners about the reliability of our services."

Optimized flight routes have also played a critical role in reducing transit times and increasing the efficiency of deliveries.

"By strategically planning our flight paths, we can ensure rapid and reliable transport of life-saving medical products."

This optimization is especially crucial for biologics, where maintaining a consistent temperature and ensuring swift delivery are essential for product integrity.

Moreover, the integration of these advanced logistics solutions has solidified Puerto Rico's position as a leading hub for the life sciences industry.

"Our continuous investment in cutting-edge logistics technology and infrastructure allows us to meet the most

rigorous global standards.

"This not only supports the growth of our local companies but also reinforces Puerto Rico's reputation as a trusted and reliable partner in the global healthcare supply chain."

Ensuring Cargo Integrity and Enhancing Efficiency

The Puerto Rico Life Sciences Air Cargo Community is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of sensitive life sciences cargo through strategic initiatives.

"Dedicated committees are constantly identifying areas for improvement and advancing educational efforts to ensure that every piece of sensitive cargo is handled with the utmost care."

A key focus is achieving widespread CEIV (Certified Evaluation Inspection Verification) certification, which "elevates the overall quality of our logistics chain.

"Upgraded airport infrastructure with state-of-the-art cold storage and specialized cargo handling ensures products remain in optimal conditions. Our enhanced infrastructure allows us to keep life sciences exports in prime condition from arrival to final destination."

Additionally, the Community leverages data from Rotate to boost strategic planning and operational efficiency.

"Rotate data gives us the visibility we need to anticipate logistical needs and adjust our air cargo routes swiftly," Vissepó states. This data-driven approach optimizes flight schedules and inventory management, ensuring timely and reliable shipments.

"By analyzing data from Rotate, we can better manage our inventory and ensure critical products are always available," he notes. Historical data analysis helps identify trends and prepare for future demand, improving the reliability and speed of exports.

"Data from Rotate has been instrumental in enhancing our strategic planning and operational efficiency," concludes Vissepó, highlighting its role in solidifying Puerto Rico's leadership in the global healthcare supply chain.

Climate-Controlled Warehousing and Emerging Trends

The development of climate-controlled warehousing is pivotal for Puerto Rico's thriving life sciences industry. These specialized facilities ensure that pharmaceutical and biological products are stored in optimal conditions, safeguarding their integrity against temperature fluctuations.

"Our climate-controlled warehouses are essential for maintaining the quality of sensitive products from storage to transport. This infrastructure minimizes risks, reduces insurance claims, and ensures that products reach their destinations in pristine condition."

Aligned with global trends in the life sciences logistics market, Puerto Rico is proactively positioning itself to capitalize on emerging demands.

"By expanding our cold chain infrastructure and adopting sustainable practices, we are meeting the evolving needs of the global market."

Additionally, advancements in AI and autonomous systems are being integrated to enhance operational efficiency and resilience. Strengthening air connections with key markets in Europe and South America further supports rapid and reliable distribution of life sciences products.

"Embracing these trends allows Puerto Rico to remain a preferred logistics hub, offering quality, efficiency, and sustainability that life sciences companies prioritize."

These initiatives not only bolster Puerto Rico's competitive edge but also ensure its continued leadership in the global life sciences logistics landscape. 🌐



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Building Smarter Skies: Digital Innovations in US Air Freight

As the global logistics landscape evolves, three industry leaders—Smart Cargo, Wiremind, and WestJet—redefines the air cargo industry with groundbreaking technologies and strategic foresight. Their collective focus on the US market, digital transformation, and e-commerce is reshaping operations and unlocking new opportunities across diverse markets.

Smart Cargo, under the leadership of Olivier Hour, leverages cutting-edge technology to optimize air cargo logistics. From its success with Azul Express in Brazil to its partnership with Delta Cargo in the U.S., Smart Cargo is a testament to how digital platforms can revolutionize e-commerce logistics. With innovations like AI-powered capacity forecasting and end-to-end cross-border solutions, the company is not only driving efficiency but also preparing airlines for a future where e-commerce constitutes over 50% of air cargo.

Wiremind, spearheaded by Guillermo Medina Moralejo, is harnessing artificial intelligence to enhance operational efficiency. Their AI-driven platform, CargoStack Optimizer, offers tools such as precise capacity forecasting and real-time data integration. With robust presence in the U.S., Wiremind's solutions address the complexities of e-commerce logistics, helping carriers like United Airlines maximize revenue potential and operational agility.

WestJet, led by Kirsten de Bruijn, exemplifies adaptability in the North American aviation sector. Expanding its cargo network and embracing digital tools like Wiremind's forecasting solutions, WestJet is bridging gaps in Canada's high-cost operational environment. Its focus on transborder and Latin American markets positions it as a key player in fulfilling e-commerce demands.

Together, these companies are tackling the challenges of the U.S. market head-on while pushing the boundaries of innovation and global connectivity. By embracing collaboration and leveraging their deep understanding of market dynamics, they are reshaping the air cargo industry.

As they grow into new markets, their forward-thinking strategies are setting the stage for a future defined by seamless, efficient, and integrated logistics.

By Laique Khan

Smart Cargo is Leading the Way in E-Commerce Innovation



Olivier Hour
Executive Vice President at Smart Cargo

The world of air cargo is undergoing a seismic shift, driven by the rapid rise of e-commerce and a global demand for streamlined logistics. At the forefront of this transformation is Smart Cargo, a leading platform provider redefining the industry through cutting-edge technology and innovative solutions. Olivier Hour, Executive Vice President at Smart Cargo sheds light on the digital transformation, its impact on global markets, and the future of air cargo.

The Digital Revolution in Air Cargo

"Digital transformation isn't just a buzzword; it's the foundation of our approach," Hour begins. Smart Cargo's integrated platform offers a comprehensive air cargo management solution used across regions from Argentina to Canada. The system is especially notable for its adaptability to the burgeoning e-commerce sector. For example, Azul Express in Brazil, a Smart Cargo client since 2019, dominates the domestic market with a 40% share, surpassing industry giants like UPS and DHL.

"In Brazil alone, Azul processes approximately 3 million packages a month—equivalent to the annual operations of some major U.S. airlines," Hour notes. This success underscores the efficiency of Smart Cargo's platform, which processes large-scale bookings with unparalleled speed and accuracy. "Amazon, for instance, can submit 8,000 bookings simultaneously, and our system processes them at 200 bookings per minute."

Unlocking Revenue Potential in the US Market

While the U.S. air cargo market presents unique challenges, it also offers untapped opportunities. "In North America, major airlines often operate with an average domestic cargo load factor of just 15%," Hour explains. Smart Cargo's solutions help airlines capitalize on this unused capacity, turning it into a revenue stream through e-commerce parcel distribution.

One standout initiative is Smart Cargo's partnership with Delta Cargo to launch DeliverDirect, a service tailored for retailers like Macy's and Saks. "Since its launch, DeliverDirect has surpassed expectations, handling over 100,000 packages monthly," says Hour. By integrating advanced logistics into the domestic market, Smart Cargo is helping U.S. airlines tap into the e-commerce boom.

A Changing Global Landscape

As e-commerce reshapes global trade, Smart Cargo's focus extends beyond North America. The company is addressing capacity constraints, particularly for shipments originating in Asia. "The rapid growth of manufacturing hubs like India and Vietnam is changing the dynamics," Hour observes. E-commerce now constitutes 30% of air cargo globally, with projections suggesting it will exceed 50% by 2030.

Smart Cargo's technological solutions empower airlines to manage factory-to-door logistics, capturing the full value chain. "A two-kilo shipment might cost \$12 to transport, but airlines typically earn just \$2," Hour explains. "Our platform enables them to claim the full \$12 by managing every step of the process."

Innovation at the Core

Innovation has always been central to Smart Cargo's strategy. The company integrates AI and machine learning to optimize capacity forecasting, pricing, and plane loading efficiency. "We differentiate between progression and true innovation," Hour emphasizes. One such breakthrough is their end-to-end cross-border e-commerce solution, now utilized by Emirates for global logistics.

"Cross-border e-commerce accounts for 20% of global e-commerce," says Hour. "Managing it involves navigating customs and regulations while ensuring delivery within strict timelines. Our platform is designed to handle these complexities seamlessly."

Collaborating for Efficiency

Infrastructure challenges remain a key concern in air cargo, particularly as e-commerce demands faster turnaround times. Smart Cargo addresses these issues by working closely with airports and logistics partners to streamline operations. "We offload tasks like labeling and consolidation outside airport premises to avoid congestion," Hour explains. This approach enhances efficiency while ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.



On the delivery end, Smart Cargo collaborates with first-mile providers to handle deconsolidation and distribution away from airports, maintaining smooth operations throughout. "Our goal is to increase cargo volumes without straining existing infrastructure," Houri asserts.

The Road Ahead

Smart Cargo's role in reshaping the air cargo industry is evident in its global impact and commitment to innovation. As

e-commerce continues to grow, the company is well-positioned to lead the next wave of transformation. "We're not just helping our clients adapt; we're helping them thrive," Houri concludes. In a world where speed and efficiency define success, Smart Cargo is setting the standard for what's possible in air logistics. By combining technological expertise with a deep understanding of market dynamics, the company is not just responding to change—it's driving it.

Unleashing the Future of Cargo: Wiremind's AI Revolution and US Market Aspirations



Guillermo Medina Moralejo
VP of Business Development at Wiremind

In the ever-evolving world of air cargo logistics, Wiremind has emerged as a pioneer, blending cutting-edge technology with a deep understanding of operational challenges. Guillermo Medina Moralejo, VP of Business Development at Wiremind, sheds light on how their AI-driven solutions are redefining the cargo industry and their growing focus on the U.S. market.

Transforming Cargo Logistics with AI

Wiremind's journey into artificial intelligence began in 2018, starting with the passenger sector and rapidly expanding to cargo through their partnership with Cargotech. Their flagship platform, CargoStack Optimizer, exemplifies this evolution.

"Our AI models emulate human decision-making processes but at scale," explains Moralejo. "These models analyze vast datasets to provide granular, context-specific recommendations, enabling more accurate and efficient decision-making."

Key innovations include:

- ▶ Capacity Forecasting: Predicting baggage occupancy on passenger flights to optimize cargo space.
- ▶ Overbooking Recommendations: Balancing risk and revenue through informed overbooking strategies.
- ▶ Entry Condition Recommendations: A game-changer for Qatar Airways, which implemented Wiremind's tailored models across its network, achieving outstanding results.

These advancements highlight Wiremind's commitment to

enhancing operational efficiency through bespoke AI solutions, continuously refined in collaboration with clients.

Data-Driven Excellence

Wiremind's strength lies in its data-centric approach. "We work closely with clients to understand their data and align it with our operational needs," Moralejo states. This iterative process ensures that models not only meet technical benchmarks but also resonate with practical requirements.

From initial data analysis to model deployment, Wiremind emphasizes collaboration. Rigorous testing validates predictions against real-world outcomes, ensuring reliability and actionable insights. This meticulous methodology has positioned Wiremind as a trusted partner in optimizing cargo logistics.

The US Market: A Growing Opportunity

The U.S. market's recent transformation presents significant opportunities for Wiremind. While Asian markets dominate exports, the U.S. has become a key hub for e-commerce imports, especially from Asia.

"This shift has prompted U.S. carriers, traditionally passenger-focused, to prioritize cargo operations," observes Moralejo. "It's an exciting development for the industry and for us."

Wiremind's presence in North America is already robust, with clients like United Airlines leveraging their SKYPALETTE solution. Now, with heightened interest from U.S. airlines, Wiremind aims



to expand its footprint, offering advanced digital strategies to optimize cargo capacity and handling processes.

Innovations Tailored for North America

North American operations often grapple with fluctuating passenger loads that impact cargo capacity. Wiremind addresses this challenge through tools like:

- ▶ **Baggage Forecasting:** Offering precise cargo capacity predictions.
- ▶ **SKYPALETTE Version 2:** An upgraded platform integrating advanced algorithms into CargoStack, optimizing space utilization throughout the cargo lifecycle.

"Our goal is to maximize revenue potential while ensuring seamless operations," Moralejo emphasizes. These innovations are poised to enhance efficiency and profitability for Wiremind's North American partners.

Addressing e-Commerce and Supply Chain Complexities

With e-commerce driving global logistics, Wiremind's solutions cater to the demand for agility and integration. Their modular, API-native design enables seamless connectivity with external systems, supporting track-and-trace capabilities and real-time data synchronization.

"Unlike legacy systems retrofitted with APIs, our tools are built ground-up for modern supply chains," notes Moralejo. This forward-thinking approach future-proofs operations, empowering customers to navigate the complexities of e-commerce logistics.

Global Partnerships and Regional Insights

Beyond North America, Wiremind's partnerships in Canada and Latin America demonstrate the versatility of their solutions. Collaborations with WestJet and AeroMexico have yielded valuable insights, driving continuous improvement and localized innovation.

In the Middle East and Africa, Wiremind's relationships with carriers like Emirates and Qatar Airways underscore their commitment to fostering digital transformation. "These regions are at the forefront of innovation, and we're excited to deepen our partnerships," says Moralejo.

The Road Ahead

As the cargo industry embraces digitalization, Wiremind is poised to lead. "Our team combines industry experience with expertise in software engineering and data science, designing tools that address real-world challenges," Moralejo reflects. By automating repetitive tasks, Wiremind enables teams to focus on value-added activities, enhancing overall efficiency.

Looking ahead, Wiremind plans to expand SKYPALETTE's capabilities to operational processes, bridging the gap between commercial planning and warehouse execution. This comprehensive vision aligns with their goal of delivering end-to-end solutions for cargo logistics.

Wiremind's innovative AI-driven tools, combined with their focus on collaboration and customization, position them as a trailblazer in cargo logistics. As they expand in the U.S. market and beyond, their commitment to empowering clients with cutting-edge solutions promises a transformative impact on the industry.

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Navigating New Heights: WestJet's Strategic Moves in Air Cargo and Passenger Services

Kirsten de Bruijn
Executive Vice President of Cargo at WestJet



WestJet, a prominent player in Canada's aviation landscape, is charting bold new paths to adapt and thrive in an evolving industry. Kirsten de Bruijn, Executive Vice President of Cargo at WestJet, recently shared insights into the airline's strategies, challenges, and future goals in an interview that highlights WestJet's growing role in both air cargo and passenger services across North and South America.

Expanding Cargo Services: Innovation Meets Demand

WestJet has been enhancing its cargo solutions to meet diverse customer needs. Recognizing the mobility of international students across Canada, the airline has partnered with universities to provide affordable transportation options. This initiative, launched a few months ago, has been well-received and includes services for university sports teams—a novel addition to its offerings.

For freight forwarders, WestJet recently introduced a priority service to address high cargo demand and reduce instances of offloading. De Bruijn noted that optimizing space in the aircraft's belly has become a cornerstone of their strategy, ensuring that both passenger and cargo operations benefit.

The US Market: Opportunities and Challenges

In the United States, WestJet is gradually expanding its footprint. While its cargo presence in the U.S. remains limited, the airline plans to increase its reach by opening more stations and finalizing partnerships in 2024.

De Bruijn highlighted the competitiveness of freighter services in the U.S., coupled with regulatory restrictions that prevent domestic operations within the country. Nonetheless, WestJet sees potential in transborder flights and continues to focus on Mexico, where it already operates around 20 flights daily.

Strengthening Latin American and Caribbean Links

Latin America and the Caribbean have emerged as key growth areas for WestJet. The demand for flights to these regions is driven by Canadian travelers seeking warmer destinations and

Canada's heavy reliance on imports.

De Bruijn emphasized the airline's role in supplying Canadian supermarkets with perishable goods from these regions, a task that cannot be handled by trucks due to stringent regulations. WestJet's flights to these regions consistently operate at full capacity, reflecting the strong demand.

Adapting to e-Commerce and Technological Advances

While e-commerce demand continues to grow, WestJet's primary focus remains on delivering reliability and speed. The airline's Dreamliner routes to Korea and Japan have facilitated the movement of goods to urban and remote areas in Canada.

To further enhance efficiency, WestJet introduced a capacity forecasting tool in partnership with Wiremind. This tool helps predict available cargo space with precision, factoring in variables such as passenger loads and baggage.

Canada's unique geography and infrastructure pose additional challenges, particularly at smaller airports that lack advanced cargo handling facilities. WestJet is actively working to bridge this gap by collaborating with these airports and exploring technological improvements.

Navigating Canada's High Operational Costs

Operating in Canada presents unique challenges, primarily due to high costs. De Bruijn pointed out that Canada's aviation expenses—including navigation fees and airport infrastructure costs—are among the highest globally.

These factors increase the cost per kilo for cargo, making it difficult for Canadian carriers to remain competitive. Despite these hurdles, WestJet remains committed to serving Canadians, especially in remote communities where alternatives are scarce.

Leveraging Data and AI

WestJet's adoption of the Wiremind capacity forecasting tool marks a significant step in optimizing cargo operations. This AI-driven solution has streamlined the booking process, reduced offloads, and enhanced customer service.



Looking ahead, WestJet plans to explore new avenues, including mail handling, which could become a key focus as the airline expands its network to destinations like Narita, London, and Paris.

Preparing for Future Trends and Challenges

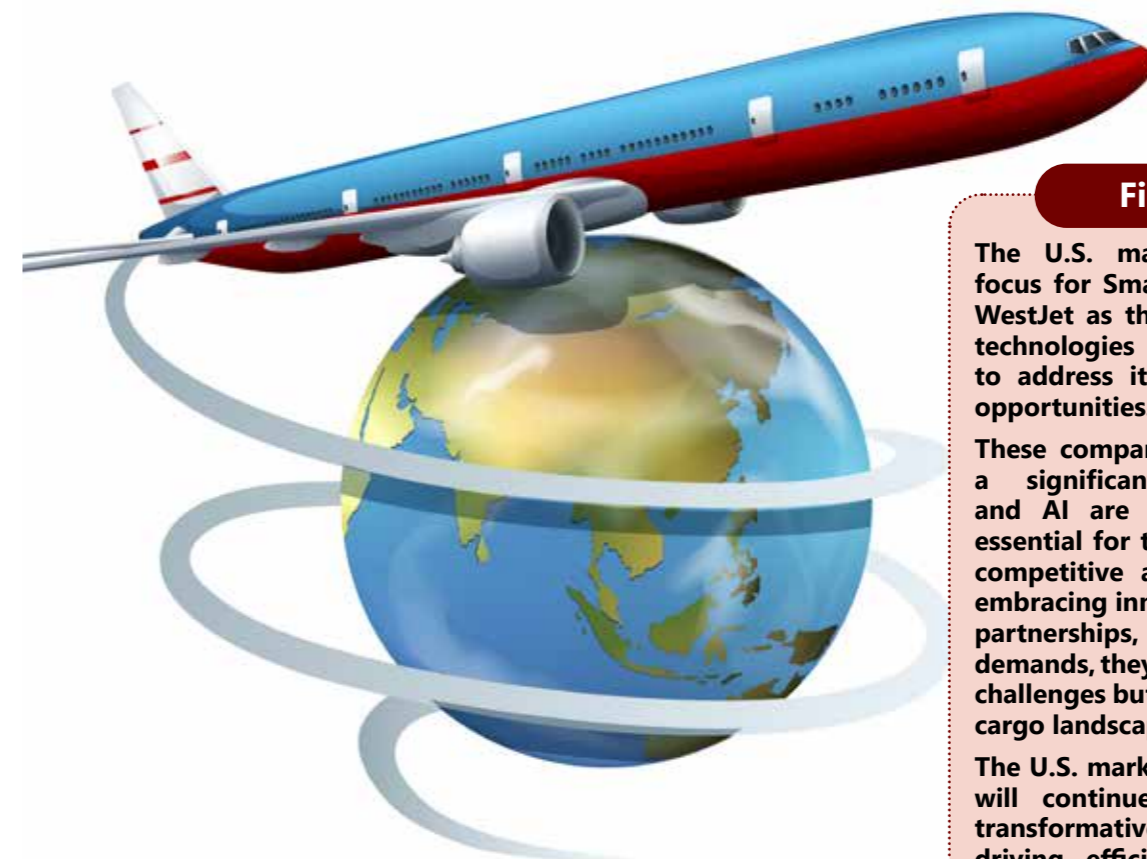
The air cargo industry faces several uncertainties, including delayed aircraft deliveries, talent shortages, and potential regulatory changes. WestJet is actively monitoring these developments and adapting its strategies to mitigate challenges.

De Bruijn acknowledged that restrictions on imports from China, for example, could significantly impact cargo volumes, given Asia's importance as a trading partner.

Exploring New Horizons

While WestJet has established a strong presence in Asia, its expansion into the Middle Eastern and African markets remains a longer-term goal. Such an expansion would require a larger fleet of wide-body aircraft and partnerships with regional carriers to ensure connectivity. For now, the airline is focused on consolidating its position in Asia and exploring opportunities in other regions.

WestJet's journey reflects a commitment to balancing innovation with operational efficiency. By addressing the unique challenges of the Canadian market, investing in technology, and expanding its network, the airline is poised to play a significant role in the global aviation industry. As De Bruijn aptly summarized, WestJet's mission is to keep air travel and cargo services accessible while navigating the complexities of a competitive and evolving market.



Final Thought

The U.S. market remains a critical focus for Smart Cargo, Wiremind, and WestJet as they leverage cutting-edge technologies and strategic approaches to address its unique challenges and opportunities.

These companies collectively highlight a significant trend: digitalization and AI are no longer optional but essential for thriving in an increasingly competitive and dynamic market. By embracing innovation, forging strategic partnerships, and adapting to market demands, they are not merely navigating challenges but actively reshaping the air cargo landscape.

The U.S. market, with its vast potential, will continue to be a testbed for transformative logistics solutions, driving efficiency, sustainability, and integration across global networks.



Volvo to launch this year its electric truck with 600-km range

Up to 600 km on one single charge. That's how far Volvo's next-generation heavy-duty electric truck will be able to drive. The longer range represents a breakthrough for long-distance transport with zero tailpipe emissions.

The electrification of heavy trucks is continuing across the world and longer distances are now becoming a possibility.

This year, Volvo is expected to launch a new long-range version of its FH Electric that will be able to reach up to 600 km on one charge.

The global truck manufacturer made the breakthrough announcement in September 2024 saying this will allow transport companies to operate electric trucks on interregional and long-distance routes and to drive a full working day without having to recharge. The new Volvo FH Electric will be released for sale during the second half of 2025, it added.

"Our new electric flagship will be a great complement to our wide range of electric trucks and enable zero-exhaust emission transport also for the longer distances. It will be a great solution for transport companies with a high annual mileage on their trucks and with a strong commitment to reduce CO2," said Roger Alm, President Volvo Trucks.

Five years of electric leadership

The enabler for the 600 km range is Volvo's new driveline technology, the so-called e-axle, which creates space for significantly more battery capacity onboard. More efficient batteries, a further improved battery management system and overall efficiency of the powertrain also contribute to the extended range.

Volvo Trucks is a global leader in medium- and heavy-duty electric trucks with eight battery-electric models in their portfolio. The wide product range makes it possible to electrify city and regional distribution, construction, waste management and, soon, long distance transport. Volvo has so far delivered more than 3,800 electric trucks to customers in 46 countries around the world.

"The transport sector represents seven percent of global carbon emissions. Battery-electric trucks are important tools to reduce the



climate footprint. Besides the important environmental gains that electric trucks bring, they offer truck drivers a much better working environment, with much lower levels of noise and vibrations," Alm noted.

Volvo Trucks drives the transition towards fossil-free transport to reach its net-zero emissions target by 2040 using a three-path technology strategy. The three-path technology approach is built on battery electric, fuel cell electric and combustion engines that run on renewable fuels like green hydrogen, biogas or HVO (Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil).

Volvo Trucks ramps up the use of low-CO2-emission steel

Along with this breakthrough announcement, Volvo said it is increasing the use of low-CO2-emission steel in its trucks. This steel is produced with recycled material and fossil-free energy and will be used in tens of thousands of Volvo trucks starting next year.

Volvo is now ramping up the use of low-CO2-emission steel in its trucks. Volvo was the world's first truck manufacturer to introduce this type of steel in its electric trucks in 2022. Now the company is expanding the use of low-CO2-emission steel to include all drivelines.

The new steel is produced by the Swedish steel company SSAB and called SSAB Zero. It is made from recycled material and produced using fossil-free electricity and biogas. As a result, CO2 is reduced by around 80% compared to the production of conventional steel using fossil energy.

This year, the frame rails in around 12,000 Volvo FH and FM trucks will be made of low-CO2-emission steel. This will result in savings of 6,600 tons of CO2 Equivalents. As the availability of low-CO2-emission steel increases, it will be introduced in more truck models as well as in other parts of the truck.

Volvo is also planning to replace other materials in its trucks with lower emissions alternatives.

"This is an additional step towards our zero emissions vision. Steel is one of the main materials in our trucks. We are also looking to exchange other materials, such as aluminium and plastic, to low emission alternatives. We are proud to lead the way in the industry when it comes to sustainable material in our trucks," said Jan Hjelmgren, Senior Vice President Product Management and Quality, Volvo Trucks.

Half of the truck consists of steel

The potential for lowering CO2 emissions is high as almost half of the truck consists of steel (47% of a Volvo FH diesel truck), and it represents about 44% of the CO2 emissions from the production (cradle to gate) out of the total 21 tons CO2 Equivalents for the Volvo FH diesel.

Volvo Group is collaborating with several suppliers around low-CO2-emission steel. Low-CO2-emission steel will be an important complement to the traditional and recycled steel used in Volvo's trucks.

Volvo Trucks is committed to the Paris agreement and to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in the supply chain by 2040, at the latest.

"We are continuously striving to further minimize our climate footprint. We are also moving towards greater circularity in both our operations and our trucks. Many of our factories, transports and dealers are today running on renewable energy," said Hjelmgren.

Text and Photos sourced from www.volvotrucks.com

The main materials in a Volvo FH diesel truck are steel (47%), cast iron (26%), polymers (11%) and aluminium (8%). They stand for around 44%, 26%, 14% and 8% of the CO2 emissions from the production (cradle to gate) out of the total 21 tons CO2 Equivalents for the Volvo FH diesel.

Low-CO2-emission steel is a steel with a significant reduction of CO2 (80% or more) from cradle to gate. CO2 Equivalents includes all greenhouse gas emissions including e.g. methane





Ethiopian Airlines and DRC Government in a joint business venture launching Air Congo



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's largest aviation group and a SKYTRAX certified Four Star Global Airline, has teamed up with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to establish its national carrier, Air Congo.

DRC government will hold a 51% majority stake, while Ethiopian Airlines will retain 49% share, and manage the airline.

Commenting on this milestone joint venture, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew stated, "The launch of Air Congo is a significant step in our strategic plan to collaborate with African governments and enhance air transport across the continent."

"This partnership will provide greater connectivity for the DRC and Central Africa, facilitating investment, trade, and tourism, thereby contributing to socio-economic growth of the region. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the DRC government, all stakeholders, and my esteemed colleagues for their commitment and collaboration in making this partnership a success," he added.

Air Congo's operations began with two Boeing 737-800 aircraft, serving domestic markets, starting with seven airports within the DRC. Key technical agreements, including aircraft lease, comprehensive technical support, and systems support agreements have been signed between the two partners. Ethiopian Airlines will also train Congolese nationals as pilots, cabin crew, sales and services staff, and technicians.

Officials said the initiative aligns with Ethiopian Airlines Vision 2035 strategy, which aims to establish multiple hubs across Africa, complementing existing partnerships with ASKY Airlines in Lomé, Malawi Airlines in Lilongwe, and Zambia Airways in Lusaka.

Travelport and Cathay Pacific extend multisource content agreement



Langley, UK: Travelport, a global technology company that powers travel bookings for hundreds of thousands of travel suppliers worldwide, and Cathay Pacific, the home airline of Hong Kong (SAR), have renewed their multi-source content distribution agreement.

The companies are currently collaborating on the integration of Cathay Pacific's New Distribution Capability (NDC) content in Travelport+, which is expected to launch in the coming months.

Chan, General Manager Sales and Distribution at Cathay Pacific, said, "With the conclusion of this far-reaching agreement, we look forward to taking this productive relationship to the next level enabling our business partners access to an even more comprehensive range of Cathay products in Travelport+ with unique NDC-sourced offers which they can

use to curate products that best answer to their customers' individual needs."

Travelport and Cathay Pacific are extending their relationship with this multi-year deal to ensure that travel agencies using Travelport+ have simplified access to multi-source content from the airline. With the progressive roll out of Cathay Pacific's NDC content and servicing capabilities in Travelport+, agents will be able to easily shop and compare the airline's NDC and non-NDC offers in one view.

"This extended multi-source content agreement reflects our commitment to providing travel agencies and their customers with a modern, effortless retailing experience when booking Cathay Pacific with Travelport+," said Damian Hickey, Global Head of Air Partners at Travelport. "With continued access to Cathay Pacific's dynamic fares in Travelport+ and the addition of NDC content, agents will be able to effortlessly view, compare and select the best options that are tailored to their customers' needs."

Travelport+ is the only modern retailing platform built for travel agencies. To date, thousands of travel agencies in more than 178 countries can easily search, sell and service multi-source content, including NDC, using Travelport's APIs, Smartpoint Cloud and Smartpoint desktop agency point-of-sale solutions.

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Turkish Airlines Sets Guinness World Records™ Title for the 'Most Countries Flown to by an Airline'

Türkiye's national carrier has a 30-country lead over its closest competitor in this hard-to-break record



Istanbul, Türkiye: Turkish Airlines, which has held the title of flying to the most countries in the world since 2012, has been officially recognized by Guinness World Records™ as the record holder. The national flag carrier has successfully achieved the Guinness World Records™ title for the "Most Countries Flown to by an Airline".

The record certificate was presented at Santiago Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport following Turkish Airlines' inaugural flight to Chile. The ceremony was attended by Turkish Airlines executives and Guinness World Records™ officials.

Based on Guinness World Records™ evaluation criteria, Turkish Airlines set the record with flights to 120 countries, reflecting only the active routes of the past 12 months. Nevertheless, including temporarily suspended routes and the inaugural flight to Chile, Turkish Airlines' flight network now spans 131 countries.

Commenting on the record, Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi stated, "We are delighted to be in Santiago, Chile, our newest route launched today, and to receive the Guinness World Records™ title for the Most Countries Flown to by



an Airline. As the only airline to hold this distinction for over a decade, we proudly showcase the strength of our flight network and reinforce our mission to connect people, cultures, and destinations around the globe."

Talal Omar, VP – MENA & Türkiye, Guinness World Records™, said: "Today, we mark a distinguished milestone for Turkish Airlines, whose steadfast commitment to connecting the world exemplifies vision and excellence in aviation. This remarkable achievement affirms its vital role in the global aviation landscape, reaching more international destinations than any other airline. We offer our congratulations to Turkish Airlines on this extraordinary accomplishment and declare them, with great distinction, Officially Amazing™."

New flights to Santiago, Chile

As this developed, Turkish Airlines has expanded its reach in the Americas by launching flights to Santiago, the capital of Chile. With Santiago as its 26th destination in the Americas, this new route holds significant importance, as it increases the number of countries in the flag carrier's network in the region to 10 and the world to 131.

Since December 19, Turkish Airlines has been operating four weekly flights from Istanbul to Santiago via São Paulo. This new route further reaffirms the flag carrier's commitment to boost its presence in the Americas.

"As the airline flying to more countries than any other in the world, we continue to connect continents and cultures. The launch of our Santiago flights once again underscores our commitment to offering travellers unparalleled connectivity options. These flights will not only contribute to trade and tourism but also enhance cultural interaction between the two nations. We look forward to welcoming passengers onboard to experience our signature services and our world-renowned Turkish hospitality while discovering the captivating beauty of Chile, Türkiye and beyond," said Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi.

With its rich history, cultural centers, and breathtaking scenery of the Andes Mountains, Santiago stands out as an attractive destination for travelers from all around the world. This new route not only expands Turkish Airlines' flight network but also strengthens the connections between Türkiye and Chile.

To make travel more comfortable, Turkish Airlines offers a wide range of privileged services for its guests. These include the Stopover Istanbul program, which provides free hotel accommodation for transit passengers with layovers of 20 hours or more, and the TourIstanbul program, which offers complimentary guided tours showcasing Istanbul's historic landmarks for layovers lasting 6 to 24 hours.

This new route not only enhances accessibility to South America but also provides travelers with an unforgettable opportunity to discover Chile's natural and cultural wonders. 🌎

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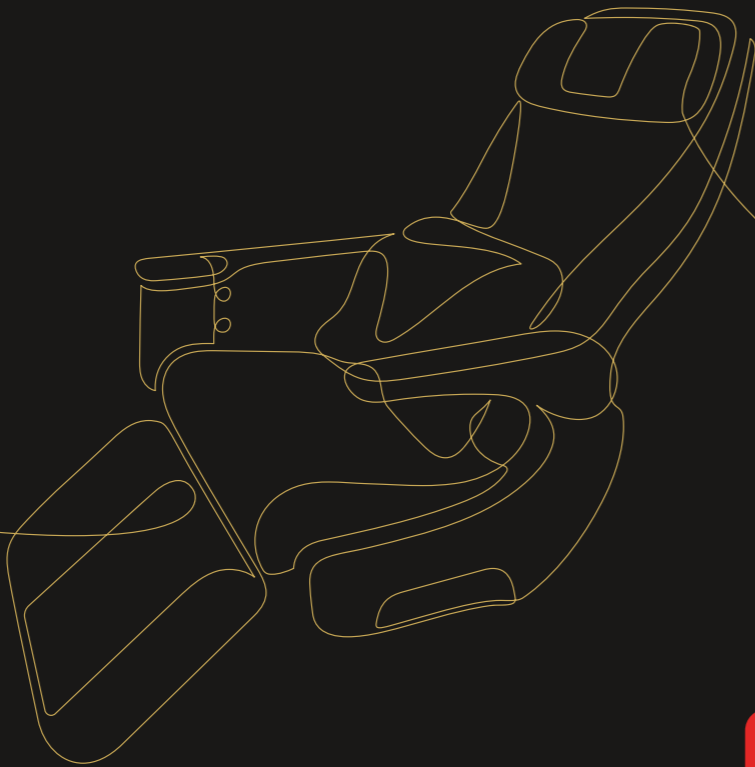
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AIRCRAFT INTERIORS MIDDLE EAST

Munich Airport welcomes its first 40 millionth passenger after the pandemic



From left, Oliver Dersch (SVP Aviation Munich Airport), Lufthansa Cabin Manager Sandra Hille, Finn Valair (5 years old), Lufthansa Flight Captain Rolf Christoph Schwarz, Christine Valair (40 millionth passenger at Munich Airport in 2024), her husband Jeff Valair and Jost Lammers (CEO Munich Airport)

Munich, Germany: Munich Airport has reached an important milestone in the recovery of its traffic after the Covid-19 pandemic: for the first time, the number of passengers exceeded 40 million again.

This 40 millionth passenger is Christine Valair, who arrived on 16 December with her family from Vancouver on Lufthansa flight LH477, an Airbus A350 named "Munich".

Munich Airport CEO Jost Lammers and Oliver Dersch, Senior Vice President Aviation at Munich Airport, greeted the family upon their arrival at the gate in Terminal 2 and presented them with a flight voucher and a shopping and parking voucher for their next flight as a pre-Christmas surprise.

"I am very pleased that we have exceeded the 40 million mark in the number of passengers this year in the aftermath of the pandemic. This shows that people want to travel, and it underscores the importance of our air traffic hub for the people and companies in Bavaria and far beyond," said Lammers.

In 2019, the airport welcomed around 48 million travelers. In terms of passenger numbers, Munich Airport has now reached 87 percent of its pre-crisis level. An important factor in the airport's positive development is transfer traffic: the share of transfer passengers was 42 percent in 2019, an increase of four percent over the previous year.

The high proportion of foreign passengers (51 percent) underlines the importance of the Bavarian hub for global air traffic. The top five countries of origin are Germany, the United States, Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Private travel in particular is booming and has already reached 98 percent of the level it was at before the crisis. According to a recent survey, around three quarters of passengers are currently on private trips, of which 51% are on holiday and leisure trips, 22% on private visits and 2% on a combination of private and business trips. Business travel, at 64% of pre-crisis levels, accounts for about one-quarter of passengers. 🇩🇪

Glasgow Prestwick Airport welcomes first dedicated e-commerce flight



Prestwick, UK: Glasgow Prestwick Airport (PIK), working alongside Royal Mail, has welcomed its first full e-commerce cargo flight, following several developments to its e-commerce operations over this year.

The flight, chartered by Zhonger Express and Jumen Logistics, was operated by Silk Way West Airlines Cargo and carried a 90-ton consignment for Royal Mail final mile deliveries.

Products from two of the four major e-commerce platforms, Temu and TikTok, were on board and representatives were on-site to observe the handling process at PIK.

This announcement follows PIK's partnership with Royal Mail, becoming its international e-commerce hub for the UK, and recent efforts to expand operations in Asia, including the appointment of a dedicated sales representative in China.

"This flight was an opportunity for us to showcase PIK's efficient

and reliable solution for e-commerce imports to the UK," said Nico Le Roux, Business Development Director, PIK. "Our expert handling teams offloaded the cargo, broke it down, and swiftly segregated it by area region, before loading onto trucks for onward delivery."

Earlier this year, PIK also invested over GBP2 million in new cargo equipment, including two high loaders and 12 new dollies, supporting fast turnaround times.

"Undertaking a business venture of this magnitude obviously comes with a high-risk level," said Edwin Ning of Zhonger Express and Jumen Logistics.

"I have a lot of confidence in my own teams here in China, and had to carry out extensive diligence in the UK to find the perfect handling partner to make this trial an overwhelming success. The Prestwick team and Royal Mail exceeded themselves and we delivered a new market-leading solution to the e-commerce platform shippers," he added.

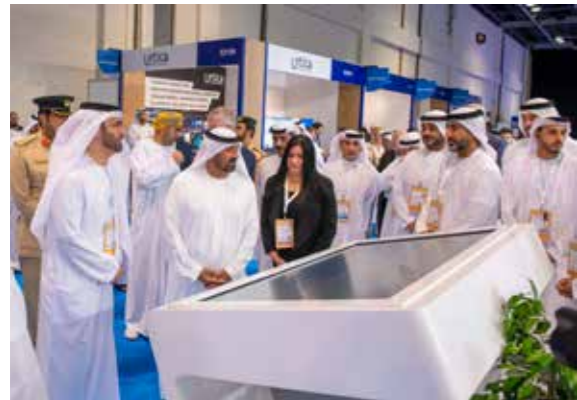
Vivian Davies, Director of Global Imports, Royal Mail, said: "Our successful collaboration with PIK in managing this flight arrival for our international e-commerce customers during peak times has showcased smoother landing, efficient airport handling, and faster, streamlined processing all the way to our final mile delivery. We are excited to continue our partnership with PIK and our customers to develop even more innovative solutions at this new eCommerce hub."

PIK's Business Development team is now working towards scheduling regular e-commerce flights in the new year and is working with Scottish exporters to ship Scottish Whisky and salmon to the Far East on the return leg of e-commerce flights. 🇬🇧



Exceptional year for global airport industry in 2024 with forecast revenues of \$194.4 bn

Domestic and International passenger traffic projected to reach 9.5 billion



Dubai, UAE: As infrastructure and operations are reshaped, the global airport industry revenues are

set to reach US\$194.4 billion in 2024 with about 9.5 billion passengers traveling this year domestically and internationally.

The Airports Council International (ACI) World, in its annual World Airport Traffic Report, forecasts global passenger traffic to increase by 10 percent, reaching 9.5 billion passengers in 2024, based on data from over 2,700 airports across 180 countries.

In 2023, it stood at 8.7 billion, reaching 95 percent of pre-pandemic levels. By the end of 2024, international passenger traffic will reach 4.1 billion, accounting for 43 percent of total passengers. The domestic passenger traffic is expected to reach 5.4 billion, making up 57 percent of the total.

ACI World further projects that the global airport investment is set to reach US\$2,404 billion in 2040 while the Middle East aviation market is due to reach US\$33.70 billion size by 2029. Middle Eastern airports are due to spend US\$151 billion on the expansion of their capacity and enhancing passenger and cargo facilities.

Technologies and Innovations for fast-rising air traffic



The best and most effective ways for airports to handle the fast-rising air traffic and the effective deployment of the newest technologies and innovations will be under the spotlight at the Airport Show, the 24th edition of which will be held in 2025 at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from May 6 to 8.

Unparalleled networking and business opportunities await the industry stakeholders and professionals with a big number of exhibitors coming from all over the world and four major co-located knowledge-enhancing conferences taking place over three days.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman of Dubai Airports, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group, and Patron of Airport Show, remarked: "Airports are vital connectors and

economic engines for communities and countries."

He added that Dubai, a key hub at the crossroads of global travel, is investing US\$35 billion in the second phase of development of the Al Maktoum International – Dubai World Central (DWC) to become the world's largest airport with a capacity of up to 260 million passengers annually, Sheikh Ahmed said airports across the region are also modernizing and expanding to meet growing demand, with a combined project value of over US\$1.3 trillion across the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

He asserted that the Airport Show, organized by RX, continues to be a vital stage for business growth and expansion in the airport industry.

By the mid-2030s, ICAO predicts that over 200,000 flights will take off and land daily all over the world. By 2036, the air transport industry will contribute US\$1.5 trillion to global GDP. By 2040, airports in the Middle East will handle 1.1 billion passengers, with the Middle East and Asia-Pacific accounting for 58 percent of global air passenger demand."

The Airport Show is the Middle East, Africa and South Asia's leading airport exhibition for 110-odd airport operators and their associates in the Middle East. The 2025 edition is expected to have a total of 160 exhibitors from 20+ countries along with more than 6,000 participants from 30+ countries.

The show will feature four insightful conferences on its sidelines - the Global Airport Leaders Forum (GALF), Airport Security Middle East, the ATC Forum, and Women in Aviation (WIA). The annual multi-events platform is being supported, among others, by the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Dubai Airports, Dubai Aviation Engineering Projects, Emirates Airlines, Dubai Air Navigation Services, and the Dubai-based global airline and dnata.

Airports transitioning to more digitalized environment



A Market Outlook report by Beumer Group, says the airport industry is further optimizing airport processes

and the passenger experience to "radically change the way we fly."

Latest technology and automation solutions are reshaping airport operations and improving passenger experience while sustainability strategies are under the spotlight to meet the passenger need for improved Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance."

Passenger experience at airports is becoming crucial in 2025, which will be a record-breaking year for passenger volume, revenue generation, and setting standards higher.

The airport industry is moving from a pre-digital to a post-digital age. The use of technology during travel will have a profound impact on how passengers interact with airports with demand focused more on automation and hands-on control over each step of their journey. 🌐



Airbus appoints Eid Al Qahtani to lead Airbus' new regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia



Eid Al Qahtani

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Airbus has appointed Eid Al Qahtani as Airbus President for the new Regional Headquarters in Riyadh, underlining the company's long-term commitment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the wider region.

Airbus' Regional Headquarters located in Riyadh represents an expansion of the company's commercial, defense, space and helicopter businesses in the KSA and beyond. Since the 1970s Airbus has significantly grown its presence in the KSA, continuously increasing its contribution to the Kingdom's aviation and aerospace sector.

Currently, Airbus employs more than 350 people in the KSA, 30% of which are Saudi nationals and the remainder represented by over 30 nationalities.

Al Qahtani will focus on strengthening partnerships with governments and stakeholders while driving new business in the region. With more than 20 years of leadership experience, including as Head of Operations for Airbus Helicopters in Riyadh, Al Qahtani brings a deep industrial expertise to the position.

Wouter Van Wersch, President Airbus International, commented: "We are privileged to see Eid Al Qahtani leading our operations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as President for Airbus from our new Regional Headquarters in Riyadh. Al Qahtani brings valuable insights to the country's ambitious goals and he understands the importance of local talent development. His proven track record in successfully leading projects in the region makes him a perfect fit for this role."

Al Qahtani added: "I am honored to be leading Airbus from our new Riyadh Headquarters and look forward to further consolidating Airbus' presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

which is a most strategic market for us. Our aim is to continue supporting Saudi Arabia's long-term goals, whilst inspiring the next generation of Saudi leaders in the aerospace sector."

In January 2024, Airbus signed an Industrial Participation (IP) agreement with the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI) to support the growth of the industrial ecosystem in alignment with the Saudi Vision 2030, aimed at diversifying the nation's economy. 🌐

Mandy Deakin-Snell Joins NeX e-Commerce Logistics Hub as Head of Global Academy Program



Mandy Deakin-Snell

Mandy's career spans some of the most influential roles in logistics, including General Management at TNT, Director of International Operations at DPD, International Managing Director at the Geopost Group, and her more recent role as Founder and CEO of MDS Alignment – coaching and consulting supply chain professionals. Her deep industry knowledge, paired with her exceptional ability to guide and inspire, makes her the ideal leader to propel the NeX Academy to new heights.

London, UK: NeX e-Commerce has welcomed Mandy Deakin-Snell as the new Head of Global Academy Program.

NeX e-Commerce CEO Justus Klüver-Schlotfeldt warmly welcomed Mandy and her team, saying, "Her unparalleled expertise, leadership skills, and talent for nurturing growth make her the perfect fit for this role. Mandy's vision and mentorship will undoubtedly inspire both our team and program participants as we push the boundaries of what's possible in cross-border logistics." 🌐

WSC Board elects new Chair and Vice Chair

Washington/London/Brussels/Singapore: The World Shipping Council (WSC) Board of Directors has elected Soren Toft, CEO of MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company, as the new Chair of the World Shipping Council Board. Randy Chen, Vice Chairman of Wan Hai Lines, has been elected Vice Chair.

Soren Toft and Randy Chen will serve a two-year term, effective immediately. The new Chair and Vice Chair succeed Rolf Habben Jansen, CEO of Hapag-Lloyd AG, and Jeremy Nixon, CEO of ONE, who have served as co-Chairs of the WSC Board for two terms, starting November 2020.

WSC President and CEO Joe Kramek highlights the extensive expertise that Soren Toft and Randy Chen will bring, and their contributions to the global shipping industry.

"I am looking forward to working with Soren Toft and Randy Chen in their new roles. Both

are esteemed leaders with a proven track record of driving innovation and sustainability in the global shipping industry. Their experience and expertise will be instrumental in continuing to develop the World Shipping Council as the united voice of liner shipping," said Kramek.

Commenting on his new role, Soren Toft, CEO of MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company: "It is an honor to step into the role of Chair for the World Shipping Council and to represent the global liner shipping industry alongside our members. WSC is today a respected voice of liner shipping, engaging with governments and organizations globally."

"An ever-changing world presents both challenges and opportunities for our industry as we head into the future, and I am eager to further advance our work to shape the future growth of a socially responsible, environmentally sustainable, safe and secure shipping industry," he added. 🌐



Randy Chen



Soren Toft

LOGIMOTION 2024

World Trade Center, Dubai





UPCOMING EVENTS



World Cargo Summit 2025 27-29 January 2025

Hosted by Ostend-Bruges International Airport, World Cargo Summit 2025 will focus on air cargo economics, strategy and market trends. This event will provide unrivalled information and business opportunities. Meet and network with airlines, airports, forwarders, project developers and aviation service providers.

Kursaal Casino, Ostend-Bruges, Belgium

MRO Middle East & Aircraft Interiors Middle East 10-11 February 2025

MRO Middle East and Aircraft Interiors Middle East (AIME) will return to Dubai this February for its biggest ever edition, gathering the entire airline supply chain over two days.

The Middle East aircraft MRO market size is estimated at USD 6.18 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 7.14 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 2.91%.

Packed with networking opportunities, the event also has The Go Live! Theatre which will offer exclusive insights and learnings for attendees to effectively strategize and overcome challenges set to shape the future of the MRO and aircraft interiors industries. More than 50 global and regional leaders are set to take the stage.

Dubai World Trade Center

Air Cargo Africa 2025 19-25 February 2025

Organized by Messe München, Air Cargo Africa 2025 is the sector's leading industry exhibition and conference. Delivering new business opportunities, global perspectives and strong networking platforms, this event offers trade show, conference and awards that engage the global air cargo community to explore and strengthen networking corridors with the African Continent.

The Sarit Expo Centre, Nairobi, Kenya

Air Cargo Conference 2-4 March 2025

This event attracts all actors in the air cargo supply chain in one location, presenting an excellent opportunity to better understand the dynamics of the industry, exchange ideas, make connections, and position your organization to take advantage of future change.

The Air Cargo Conference is backed by three of the most reputable and influential associations in air cargo, freight forwarding, airlines and airports: AEMCA, ACI-NA, and Airforwarders Association. With powerful thought leaders, the event brings the most progressive insights to attendees.

Dallas, Texas

IATA World Cargo Symposium 2025 15-17 April 2025

The World Cargo Symposium (WCS) is the largest and most prestigious air cargo annual event. The next WCS will continue offering plenary sessions, specialized streams, workshops, and executive summits, tackling aspects related to technology, innovation, security, customs, cargo operations, and sustainability.

Participate in exclusive business, networking, and branding opportunities tailored for over 1,400 industry leaders and decision-makers. Access industry intelligence, staying updated on the latest trends.

Dubai, UAE

Air Cargo Europe 2025 2-5 June 2025

air cargo Europe is the most important exhibition and conference for the global air cargo industry and is part of the world's leading trade fair transport logistic since 2003, held every two years in Munich.

Considered as the leading platform for international networking in the air freight industry, this four-day trade show offers innovative products, systems and technologies as well as a wealth of expert knowledge. The exhibition is part of transport logistic, the world's leading trade fair for logistics, mobility, IT, and supply chain management.

Munich, Germany

Transport Logistic 2025 2-5 June 2025

Experience exciting insights, groundbreaking impulses and pioneering innovations in the world of logistics, mobility, IT and supply chain management at transport logistic 2025. Learn how current technologies and trends are driving the industry and shaping the future of logistics. Use this unique platform to gain valuable insights and further develop your business strategy.

Munich, Germany

Whatever you see in the world is FROM İSTANBUL

Nairobi ✈ İstanbul ✈ Tokyo

More than 2 million tons of cargo is transported to the world from SMARTIST annually with Turkish Cargo, the air cargo brand that flies to the most destinations in the world.



THE AIR LOGISTICS CENTER OF THE WORLD

TURKISH CARGO SMARTIST

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Air Freight



Air Cargo charter



Cargo consolidation



Prime Aviation excels in offering customized cargo solutions to a diverse clientele, including international freight forwarders, shippers, logistics providers, governments, and humanitarian relief organizations. With a global reach extending from Europe to China, CIS countries, India, and the USA, we have cultivated an extensive network of agents and established offices around the world.

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▪ **Pickup & Delivery Options**

▪ **Customs clearance**

▪ **Online Booking**