

LIGHTHOUSE

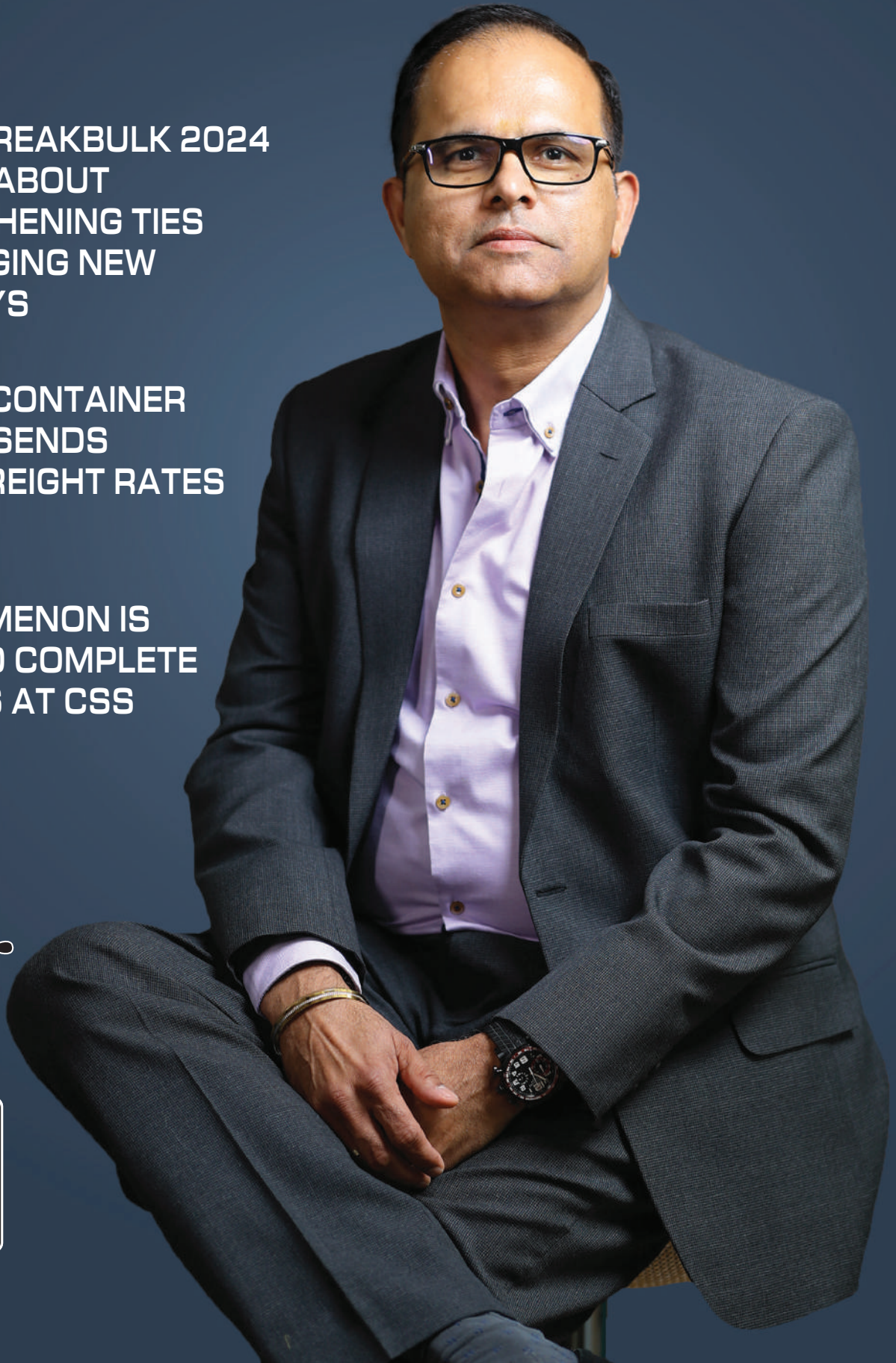
JULY - AUGUST 2024

BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF CSS GROUP

**CSS AT BREAKBULK 2024
WAS ALL ABOUT
STRENGTHENING TIES
AND FORGING NEW
PATHWAYS**

**SUDDEN CONTAINER
CRUNCH SENDS
OCEAN FREIGHT RATES
SOARING**

**RAKESH MENON IS
HAPPY TO COMPLETE
26 YEARS AT CSS**



DIRECT LCL IMPORT FROM IZMIR TO JEBEL ALI



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Chairman's Reflection



T S KALADHARAN

A perfect storm seems to be brewing in the global trade scenario with increased ocean freight rates and limitations in container capacities. There are talks that freight rates might even touch the heights it reached during the pandemic era.

Rising Freight Rates

According to Xeneta, the leading ocean and air freight rate benchmarking and market analytics platform, the Far East to North Europe route saw a 30% increase from April to May. Rates from the Far East to the US West Coast rose by 29% in the same period, 214% higher than the previous year. Global spot rates for air freight have also surged. The rise in shipping rates can be attributed to fluctuating demand, port congestion, and geopolitical tensions.

The Red Sea Situation

The complexity of the situation in the Red Sea has intensified forcing cargo vessels to lengthen their journey, resulting in additional time and costs to get the cargo to its destinations. Other effects include bottlenecks in sea routes along with delays, and equipment and capacity shortages.

Moving Forward with Agility

Logistics powers global economies. However, logistics service providers face increased disruptions and uncertainties in the post-pandemic era. On the positive side, this has helped the industry to focus on risk and resilience.

The current scenario demands a collective effort and strategic agility from all of us. At CSS, we are committed to overcoming these obstacles, ensuring seamless and efficient delivery for our clients and partners. By staying informed and adaptable, we can mitigate the adverse effects on our operations. We have leveraged advanced analytics and real-time data to make informed decisions, optimize routes, and manage costs effectively.

The CSS CSR Initiatives

With the start of the new academic year, it's that time of the year when we see children carrying their school bags, packing their lunch boxes, and marching into school gates. Every year, the CSS Group gifts school bags, umbrellas, and pencil boxes to the children of the pre-primary and primary grades in schools in Kerala. We also organize a delicious lunch at the schools, wholeheartedly enjoyed by the students, teachers, and parents. As an initiative of the company's CSR efforts, it reflects our commitment to giving back to society and fostering a nurturing environment for future generations.

Leadership Through Personal Growth

The book "The Journey of Leadership" written by four McKinsey senior partners is a must-read. It reveals why leaders must first connect with themselves. At CSS, every person is a leader. We need to embrace personal growth to inspire and empower our teams. The book throws light on the inside-out leadership journey emphasizing the importance of self-awareness, empathy, and resilience. By focusing on these qualities, we can lead our organization with authenticity and vision. This approach not only enhances our leadership capabilities but also fosters a culture of trust and collaboration within our teams, driving overall success and innovation.

In these times of unprecedented challenges and opportunities, our commitment to excellence and innovation remains unwavering. By understanding the complexities of the container crunch, adapting to the driving factors behind shipping rate surges, and cultivating a leadership style rooted in personal growth, we are well-positioned to navigate the future. Together, we will continue to deliver exceptional value to our customers and stakeholders, reinforcing our position as a leader in the logistics industry.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication.



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Lighthouse is produced by the CSS Group's Corporate Communications & Marketing Department
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CSS AT BREAKBULK 2024 WAS ALL ABOUT STRENGTHENING TIES AND FORGING NEW PATHWAYS

Breakbulk Europe continues to be a monumental event in the shipping industry, consistently bringing together global players in the sector. After the success of Breakbulk Europe 2023, the next edition of Breakbulk Europe was held on 21-23 May 2024 in Rotterdam Ahoy. This gathering featured 4,663 companies, including 444 network members and 534 exhibitors, representing a broad spectrum of the shipping and logistics industry. Notably, 94% of participants were already committed to the 2024 event, underscoring its significance and success.



The top three countries by attendance were the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium, with substantial representation from China, India, Turkey, UAE, Brazil, and Singapore. The event attracted companies from various sectors, such as Freight Forwarding, Maritime Transport, Ports and Terminals, Cargo Ownership, Road Transport Services, Industry-Related Services, Equipment Providers, IT Products and Services, and Air Transport. This diverse participation highlighted the comprehensive nature of Breakbulk Europe and its importance as a convergence point for industry leaders.

Breakbulk Europe 2024 was a hub of activity, featuring numerous events designed to facilitate networking, learning, and collaboration. A total of 642 shippers attended, providing a unique opportunity for the CSS team to engage with some of the industry's most influential decision-makers. Breakbulk Boulevard saw 1,400 guests networking beyond the exhibition floor, while the special Women in Breakbulk breakfast hosted over 150 inspiring women. Additionally, an exclusive Rotterdam boat tour provided a unique networking venue for 250 guests.

Innovation was a key theme at the Breakbulk Futures Zone, where leading industry innovators showcased their latest products and services. The event also emphasized education, with 14 main stage sessions featuring over 52 speakers, Breakbulk Futures sessions with 13 speakers, chartering workshops mentored by the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers, and an Education Day involving 191 students.

Consolidated Shipping Services (CSS) has been a proud participant of the Breakbulk event for several years, and 2024 was no exception. Led by Mr. Midhun and Mr. Robin from CSS Dubai and Mr. Vijay, Mr. Himanshu and Mr. Mahak from CSS Global Forwarding India, the CSS team made a significant impact at the event.

CSS's project team, known for their expertise and in-depth knowledge of the shipping domain, adeptly handled breakbulk and project cargo, seizing numerous opportunities across the Middle East and Indian regions. The event further cemented CSS's prowess, with several new prospects in the pipeline. The team plans to leverage the insights and key takeaways from Breakbulk Europe to innovate and enhance their future projects.

It was a great closure at the final days at Breakbulk Europe, GPLN, and THLG Meetings. It was wonderful to see so many colleagues, close friends, and well-wishers from around the globe. The support and wishes for long-term growth were truly a blessing. Being surrounded by like-minded individuals was inspiring, and CSS is excited about the future opportunities that lie ahead.

The Breakbulk event provided CSS with an invaluable platform to forge strategic alliances and network with global companies. It also offered a venue for discussing the latest developments and technologies in handling breakbulk and project cargo. The knowledge and experiences gained at Breakbulk Europe have empowered the CSS team to develop new ideas and create innovative solutions for future projects.

Participating in Breakbulk Europe 2024 was both memorable and enjoyable for the CSS team. The insights gained and the connections made have strengthened the team's capabilities, ensuring they are well-prepared for upcoming projects. As the team looks forward to the Breakbulk 2025 event, scheduled for May 13th to 15th they are excited about the potential for further growth and innovation.

CSS remains committed to excellence and innovation in the shipping industry, and its continued participation in Breakbulk Europe is a demonstration of its dedication to staying at the forefront of industry developments. With the strong foundation built at Breakbulk 2024, CSS is poised for even greater achievements in the future.



RAKESH MENON IS HAPPY TO COMPLETE 26 YEARS AT CSS

Rakesh Iykkara Menon has just completed an impressive 26 years at CSS. Reflecting on this remarkable milestone, he said, "I cannot believe it is already 26 years. Time flies when you are doing a great job, along with a wonderful team and the right management. Having CSS as part of my life for such a long time has been an honour and pleasure."



Rakesh's career at CSS began with a modest role as a Sales Executive. Through dedication, hard work, and continuous learning, he rose to become the Director of Sales. His journey at CSS could not have happened without his commitment and the supportive environment at CSS that nurtures talent and encourages growth.

As someone from Generation X, Rakesh sometimes smiles when he participates in or hears discussions about "job-hopping Millennials." In an era where changing jobs frequently is common, Rakesh feels fortunate to have found a steady job and satisfaction at CSS. His long tenure at the company highlights the value of loyalty and the benefits of growing within a single organization.

Rakesh's success story is a testament not just to his efforts, but also to the incredible support he has received from his colleagues, customers, and mentors. He extends his heartfelt thanks to all those who have been a part of his journey at CSS. Their guidance, encouragement, and contributions to his professional development have been invaluable, and he is deeply appreciative of their role in his success.

He also acknowledged a particular person who believed in him but didn't hesitate to give him overnight assignments and training to enhance his shipping knowledge. This blend of belief and rigorous training has played a crucial role in shaping his expertise and career at CSS.

Even after 26 years, Rakesh's passion for learning remains undiminished. He is deeply appreciative of the ongoing opportunities for growth and development at CSS, which have played a significant role in his journey. His story is a testament to the power of lifelong learning and the positive impact of a supportive and challenging work environment, inspiring us all to continue growing and evolving in our roles.

His 26-year journey at CSS is not just a personal achievement but a remarkable example of how dedication, growth, and the power of a supportive workplace can lead to significant development. From his humble beginnings as a Sales Executive to his current role as the Director of Sales, his story is a beacon of inspiration for all of us. As he continues to learn and contribute to the company, his experience and insights remain invaluable, making us all proud to be a part of CSS.

CSS ATTENDS THE LARGEST GLOBAL NVOCC & LCL CARGO NETWORK CONFERENCE AT PHUKET



The largest gathering of Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCC) and Less-than-Container Load (LCL) Cargo Network, known as the NEPTUNE Conference, was successfully concluded at the picturesque Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort in Phuket, Thailand, from May 16-19, 2024. This year's conference marked a significant milestone, bringing together 400 Consolidators and LCL Forwarders from around the globe, making it the largest NEPTUNE conference to date.

The event brought together Consolidators, Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs), and Less-than-Container Load (LCL) forwarders from around the globe. With a shared mission to enhance the global logistics and forwarding community, attendees engaged in various activities designed to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones.

About the Neptune Cargo Network

Neptune Cargo Network, the first and biggest global NVOCC and LCL cargo network, stands at the forefront of connecting sea freight professionals specializing in sea freight consolidations. As the only network dedicated to linking consolidators on a non-exclusive platform, it brings together over 215 Consolidators and LCL Forwarders from across the globe. This unique network facilitates unparalleled opportunities for collaboration, enabling members to strengthen partnerships, share insights, and enhance their operations within the global logistics industry. By fostering a community of experts, Neptune Cargo Network continues to lead the way in connecting and empowering sea freight professionals worldwide.

Events at the Neptune Cargo Network

The schedule was meticulously planned to balance business and leisure. Here's a detailed look at what happened at the event.

Before the conference officially began, attendees were treated to the Neptune Fellowship Golf Game at the Loch Palm Golf Club. Despite the sweltering heat and humidity, participants displayed remarkable skill and sportsmanship.



Day 1: Welcome Cocktail

The event started with a welcome cocktail reception, where delegates could network in a relaxed, informal setting. This initial gathering set the tone for the following days, fostering a spirit of camaraderie and collaboration. The Neptune Welcome Cocktail set a lively tone for the conference, with delegates donning their best tropical or beach attire. The "Around the World Bottles" activity was a highlight, allowing members to share and enjoy unique beverages from their home countries.

Day 2: Face-to-Face Meetings

Day two was dedicated to intensive face-to-face meetings with consolidators from around the world. These sessions provided a platform for delegates to discuss current challenges, share insights, and explore potential business opportunities. The structured yet flexible format allowed for meaningful and productive interactions.

Day 3: Cultural Exploration and Meetings

The third day offered a blend of cultural immersion and professional engagement. Attendees embarked on a visit to the iconic Big Buddha, one of Phuket's most revered landmarks. This excursion showcased the island's rich cultural heritage and offered a unique setting for informal networking.

Following the cultural tour, the delegates resumed their meetings, delving deeper into discussions on logistics strategies, market trends, and collaborative projects. The synergy of combining cultural exploration with business meetings underscored the holistic approach of the Neptune Cargo Network.

Day 4: Continued Meetings and Closing Cocktail

The final day featured additional meetings, allowing participants to finalize discussions and outline actionable plans. The event concluded with a closing cocktail, celebrating the successful interactions and the promising future collaborations. This celebratory gathering was a testament to the strengthened bonds within the network.

The 'Newbie Open Mic' session provided a platform for new members to introduce themselves and their companies, fostering a sense of community and collaboration from the outset. The conference also took the time to honor its loyal members with Loyalty Awards. A panel discussion featuring industry experts offered valuable insights into the industry's current trends and challenges. The heart of the conference, the 'Face-to-Face Meetings,' saw over 400 Consolidators and LCL Forwarders reconnecting and forming new partnerships, highlighting the conference's role as a pivotal platform for business growth and development.

The NEPTUNE conference not only facilitated business partnerships but also fostered priceless and unconditional friendships among attendees, underscoring the importance of collaboration, community, and the shared goal of advancing the global NVOCC and LCL cargo industry.

CSS at the Neptune Cargo Network

Ranjith Haridas, Manager of Sales - NVOCC, and Shubham Lalwani, Manager of the Key Information Desk, proudly represented CSS Group, highlighting their significant contributions to the Neptune Cargo Network. During the event, CSS Group was honored with a trophy for their unwavering loyalty and partnership over the past five years.

Conclusion

The 2024 Neptune Cargo Network Annual Partnership Meeting in Phuket was more than just a conference; it was an enriching experience that combined professional development with the allure of a tropical paradise. Attendees left with not only new business insights and contacts but also cherished memories of their time on one of Thailand's most beautiful islands.

As the Neptune Cargo Network continues to grow and evolve, events like these play a crucial role in fostering a global community of logistics professionals. The success of the Phuket meeting sets a high benchmark for future gatherings, promising even more impactful and enjoyable experiences in the years to come. As delegates departed Phuket, they left with renewed connections, fresh insights, and the anticipation of future gatherings that will continue to build on the success of this year's landmark event.



An advertisement for Direct LCL Console Service from Nhava Sheva to Abu Dhabi. The background is a collage of images: a modern city skyline with skyscrapers, a busy port with many colorful shipping containers, and a sunset over a city. The text 'www.cssgroupsite.com' is in the top left, and 'Follow us on' with social media icons (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn) is in the top right. The main text reads 'DIRECT LCL CONSOLE SERVICE FROM NHAVA SHEVA TO ABU DHABI' in large white letters on a dark blue background.



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THE THRISSUR POORAM ! A RESPLENDENT FESTIVAL CELEBRATED IN THRISSUR, KERALA, INDIA.

This year, Pooram was celebrated on May 19th and 20th, 2024. Mr Radhakrishnan (RK) from CSS Group was privileged to speak about Thrissur Pooram for a global audience on television channels. It has been his ninth year as a commentator for this event on popular television channels. He spoke particularly about the 'Kudamaatom' which is a swift and rhythmic changing of colored and sequined parasols. This is a major event, where Thiruvambady and Paramakkavu deities on caparisoned elephants meet face to face titled as the "Divine Durbar."



Radhakrishnan Machingal
Manager Finance, HR & Administration
ISS Relocations



Thrissur Pooram was choreographed by the ruler of Cochin State, H.H.Rama Varma, popularly known as "Sakthan Thampuran", two centuries ago.

On the day of Pooram, when the ceremonial fireworks resonate, an intense fervor grips the magnificent city. The world converges on Thrissur's grounds day and night. For each Thrissurite, no matter where they are, the day of Pooram draws them back to the corridors of Thrissur. Their eyes, ears, and hearts will be roaming around in their homeland. The exciting processions, the tantalizing melam, the mesmerizing fireworks, the alluring elephants.... days and nights are forgotten in the festivities.

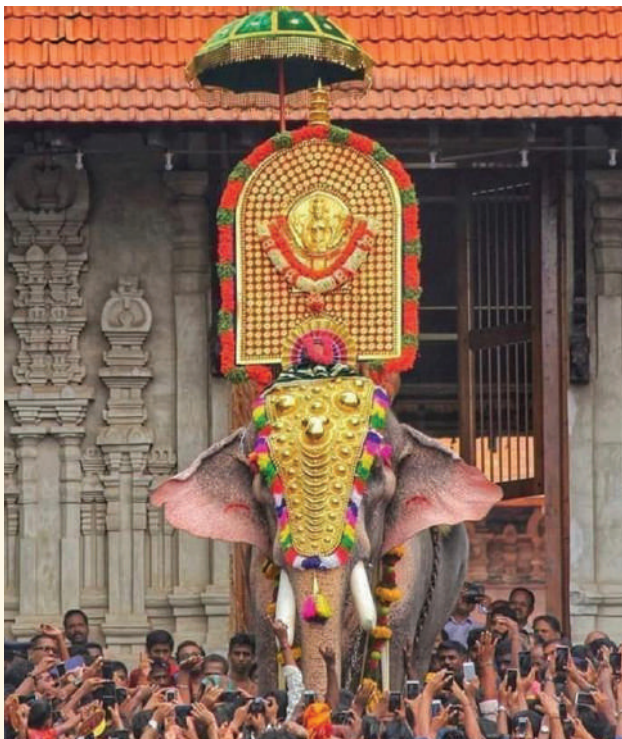
Thekkinkadu, shining in the light of the beautifully decorated 'pandals' (temporarily erected man made structure illuminated with colors and lights) and the torchlights along with the elephant's caparison or 'nettipattam' lures us again into the grandeur of tradition.

After the declaration of pooram by the supporting temples a week before the festival, each Thrissurite's heart resonates with excitement, "We must go to Thekkinkadu Maidan, and it's here where the celebrations happen ! All the eyes and hearts around the World are focused to the Swaraj Round of Thrissur with excitement".

The unparalleled beauty of Thrissur Thekkinkadu ground shines through in the scorching heat. The Malayalam month 'medam' is the hottest in Kerala, the most spectacular and divine festival show on this planet, the Thrissur Pooram is celebrated on the 'Pooram Naal' (Malayalam day) of this month which falls during April - May.

Situated right in the middle of the city is Thekkinkadu Maidanam (Ground) sprawls over a large part of the city with a temple in the middle of the maidan, Vadakkunnathan, where everything comes together. Traditionally, two groups representing the main geographic divisions of Thrissur, Paramekkavu Temple and Thiruvambady Temple along with eight other supporting temples are the participants of Thrissur Pooram. The supporting participating poorams are normally called Mini Poorams.

The mini poorams arrive spreading color and vigor to the city of Thrissur through the royal pathways... Thiruvambady's Madathil varavu... the throbbing sound of Panchavadyam... Paramekkavu's grand procession... the fierceness of the melam under the ilanji tree at Vadakkunnathan... the music intensifies and thousands of fingers rise and fall in the sky, blending into the ultimate intensity and reveling in joy...the southern descent witnessed by a sea of people... the Kudamattam... the sky filled with fireworks...



The walk from the Machingal Tharavadu, (situated on Machingal lane of MG Road Thrissur), to the Swaraj Round of Thrissur becomes brisk. The rhythm of the rising tempo seeps into the veins, spreading warmth and, in that excitement, everything else is forgotten.

Time neither advances nor retreats. It stays standstill. The main participants, Paramekkavu and Thiruvambady create an atmosphere forgetting the competitions and celebrate as ONE, the oneness is made felt to all.

Fireworks paint playful displays across the sky during the early hours of following day.

The next day, after the pooram is dispersed by the two magnificent elephants, the customary kanji (rice gruel) is consumed at the thirty-sixth hour of Pooram to alleviate the fatigue. And then, preparations for the Pooram of the coming year will slowly begin.

I believe is blessed by the Gods & Goddesses of Thrissur to commentate Pooram for Television channels, and with this year Pooram which was celebrated on May 19th and 20th 2024 completed Nine blessed Years. I feel, am fortunate to be appointed to speak about my Thrissur Pooram for a Global audience, particularly the 'Kudamaatom', which is a swift and rhythmic changing of colored & sequined parasols. This is listed as one of the major events of Pooram, where both the Thiruvambady and Paramekkavu deities on caparisoned elephants meet face to face, accompanied by other elephants, and we title this moment as "Divine Durbar".

I was also fortunate to welcome and witness the participation of "Devas Aromal" the elephant owned by our Chairman Mr T S Kaladharan at the 2023 and 2024 pooram.

During the closing of pooram celebrations at the 'Upacharam Chollal' by the major participants, the responsible leaders announce the following years date and agree to celebrate and meet.

From that moment we Thrissurites also fix up our next annual calendar !

I look forward to May 6, 7 of 2025.....and am sure so will be 'Aromal' , once been a part of Thrissur Pooram, You can never skip it !!

THE DWC AIRPORT EXPANSION AND ITS IMPACT ON JAFZA

The DWC airport expansion in Dubai South is all set to have a huge impact on the shipping and logistics industry. The expansion would include the usage of solar power and green aviation fuel. This is a huge step in reducing the environmental footprint of Dubai. Incorporating sustainable transportation in the future is the way to go ahead for shipping and logistics companies.



The CSS Headquarters, located in JAFZA (Jebel Ali Free Zone), plays a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency of air operations. The proximity of JAFZA to the DXB airport and the new DWC airport can significantly improve the logistics operations of CSS. Rowan Coelho, emphasizes the airport expansion's strategic advantage, saying, "Having a CFS (Container Freight Station) of our own helps improve the efficiency of air operations, especially when you measure the distance from JAFZA until the DXB airport."



The expansion of the DWC airport has brought several benefits to freight forwarders. The expanded facilities of the airport can now handle a higher volume of cargo, accommodating the growing demands of the logistics industry. The infrastructure is designed to scale with future growth, ensuring long-term sustainability and adaptability. Enhanced processes and state-of-the-art technology have streamlined operations, reducing turnaround times and increasing productivity. Larger volumes and efficient processes lead to cost savings, benefiting businesses and customers alike. The unique corridor connecting rail, sea, and air networks maximizes logistical efficiency and flexibility.

One of the most significant advantages of the DWC airport expansion is the boost it provides for sea/air operations. In terms of cost, distance, and time, the integration of sea and air transport in this corridor will now offer unparalleled advantages. Not only will it reduce transit times and costs, but it will make Dubai an even more attractive hub for global trade.

Dubai, already a major global trade hub, is set to elevate its status with the DWC airport expansion. The expansion of the DWC airport is set to create a whole new dream destination in Dubai. It stands as a symbol of the city's ambition and determination to shape the future of aviation. This project aligns with Dubai's vision of sustainable growth and innovation in the transportation sector.

Several advantages can come with the expansion of the DWC airport. Both operational and commercial benefits are evident, promising a brighter future for logistics and trade in Dubai. By integrating sustainable practices, enhancing operational efficiency, and creating a robust transport network, the DWC airport is set to redefine global trade dynamics and accelerate the shipping and logistics industry by leaps and bounds.



SINGAPORE PORT REACTIVATES MOTHBALLED BERTHS TO COMBAT CONGESTION

The Port of Singapore, renowned for its efficiency as the world's largest trans-shipment hub, is grappling with significant congestion issues. To tackle the delays, the port is reopening older berths to increase its capacity, a strategic move aimed at alleviating the current backlog.

In recent weeks, container ships calling at the Port of Singapore have encountered unprecedented berthing delays, some extending up to seven days. This situation has led to a substantial increase in the total capacity waiting at the dock, reaching a staggering 450,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) as reported by Seatrade Maritime News.

The Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) has attributed this congestion to the Red Sea crisis and the subsequent diversion of vessels via the Cape of Good Hope. These diversions have resulted in off-schedule arrivals and what MPA describes as "vessel bunching." Compounding the issue is a notable surge in vessel arrivals, with the port handling 13.36 million TEU in the first four months of the year—a robust 8.8% increase.

The heightened demand for container handling in Singapore stems from several container lines opting to discharge more containers at the port. This decision is driven by the need to forgo subsequent voyages to catch up on their schedules. Consequently, the number of containers handled per vessel has seen a significant rise.

In response, the MPA, in collaboration with Singapore's Ministry of Transport and terminal operator PSA, has been proactively preparing for the increased vessel arrivals since late 2023. As part of these efforts, PSA has reactivated older berths and yards at Keppel Terminal. This initiative has successfully boosted the port's capacity from 770,000 TEU weekly to the current 820,000 TEU.

Keppel Terminal, located near Singapore's city center, is in the process of being phased out as operations transition to Tuas Port, situated in the far west of the island. In line with this transition, three new berths are slated to become operational at Tuas Port later this year. PSA plans to expedite the development of these berths to enhance overall container handling capacity in the short term.

The MPA and PSA are also working closely with container lines and regional feeders to keep them informed about berth availability. This collaboration includes advising shipping lines on arrival times to minimize berthing delays.

The Port of Singapore's efforts to reactivate mothballed berths underscores its commitment to maintaining its status as a leading global transshipment hub. By strategically increasing capacity and streamlining operations, the port aims to alleviate congestion and ensure smoother, more efficient handling of the ever-growing volume of container traffic. These measures are vital to sustaining the port's operational excellence and accommodating future growth in maritime trade.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES: THE EVOLUTION OF FREIGHT FORWARDING IN THE UAE

The business landscape will become increasingly competitive moving forward; however, the market is poised for substantial growth, with expectations of exponential expansion. The United Arab Emirates Freight and Logistics Market is projected to be valued at 20.11 billion USD in 2024, with an anticipated increase to 30.19 billion USD by 2030.

The UAE's freight industry will be bustling over the next five years. Expanding the business model across all verticals will enhance reach and increase the likelihood of higher business conversions. Relying solely on freight forwarding is no longer feasible; we must offer comprehensive services under one umbrella to remain competitive. The CSS Group is experienced to take up this challenge in the industry.



Midhun George
General manager - Abu Dhabi

The market presents greater challenges due to various external factors, including the Red Sea crisis. As the crisis escalated, major shipping routes were disrupted, particularly impacting vessels navigating through the Suez Canal due to security concerns. These incidents hindered the smooth flow of maritime traffic, causing delays and increased operational costs. The disruption of this vital waterway, which connects Europe to the Indian Ocean and Asia, has had a ripple effect on the global supply chain, leading to potential shortages or delays in goods transportation.

Approximately 30 percent of global trade passes through the Red Sea via the Suez Canal, the most direct route between Europe and Southeast Asia. Heightened security risks have necessitated increased measures, prompting shipping companies to reroute vessels away from high-risk areas, thereby incurring additional costs for enhanced security. These challenges have also influenced insurance premiums for ships operating in these waters, impacting global trade.

As a result, many large shipping firms are now avoiding the Suez Canal, container vessels opting for the alternative route around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, which extends transit time by more than 14 days. This slowdown in supply chains is particularly problematic for small businesses, which often have significant capital tied up in inventory.

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is not only a political and cultural hub but also a key player in the global logistics and transportation sectors. The city is strategically located and continues to invest heavily in infrastructure and technological advancements to bolster its logistics capabilities.



Khalifa Port Expansion: Khalifa Port, one of the most advanced ports in the region, is undergoing significant expansion. The development includes new terminals and an increase in container capacity, aiming to handle the growing volume of maritime trade. This expansion is set to enhance Abu Dhabi's position as a major logistics hub.

Etihaad Rail: Etihaad Rail is a major project that will transform freight logistics in the UAE. Once completed, it will connect Abu Dhabi to key cities and ports across the Emirates, facilitating efficient and cost-effective transportation of goods. This rail network is expected to reduce road congestion and lower carbon emissions.

Abu Dhabi Ports' Digital Transformation: Abu Dhabi Ports is implementing advanced digital solutions to streamline operations. This includes the adoption of blockchain technology, automation, and AI to improve supply chain transparency, efficiency, and security. The introduction of digital ports and smart logistics solutions is aimed at optimizing cargo handling and customs processes.

Khalifa Economic Zones Abu Dhabi (KEZAD): KEZAD is a major initiative aimed at creating one of the largest integrated trade, logistics, and industrial hubs in the region. Covering an area of over 410 square kilometers, KEZAD offers world-class infrastructure, tax incentives, and streamlined regulations to attract international businesses. It includes dedicated zones for logistics, manufacturing, and trade, providing comprehensive support for supply chain activities.

Air Cargo Developments: Abu Dhabi International Airport is expanding its cargo facilities to accommodate the growing demand for air freight. The development includes new cargo terminals and advanced handling facilities, enhancing the airport's capability to serve as a major air cargo hub in the region.

Green Logistics Initiatives: Sustainability is a key focus in Abu Dhabi's logistics sector. Initiatives include the promotion of electric and hybrid vehicles for transportation, development of sustainable warehousing solutions, and efforts to reduce carbon footprints across supply chains.

Integrated Logistics Services: Companies in Abu Dhabi are increasingly offering integrated logistics solutions that cover the entire supply chain. This includes warehousing, distribution, transportation, and value-added services such as packaging and customs clearance. These services are designed to provide a seamless logistics experience for businesses operating in the region.

Strategic Partnerships and Investments: Abu Dhabi is forging strategic partnerships with international logistics companies and investing in joint ventures to enhance its logistics infrastructure. These collaborations aim to bring in expertise, technology, and capital to support the growth of the logistics sector. Aldar invests \$272mn to expand logistics real estate in Dubai, Abu Dhabi. The real estate developer, investor, and asset manager first entered the sector in 2022 with the majority acquisition of Abu Dhabi Business Hub (ADBH). CSS Abu Dhabi is strategically located in the ADHB, ICAD.

These developments highlight Abu Dhabi's commitment to becoming a global logistics powerhouse, leveraging its strategic location, advanced infrastructure, and innovative technologies to drive growth and efficiency in the logistics sector.



SUDDEN CONTAINER CRUNCH SENDS OCEAN FREIGHT RATES SOARING

The global shipping industry is experiencing a sudden and severe container capacity crunch just as the peak shipping season begins. This has resulted in ocean freight spot rates surging by approximately 30% over the past few weeks, with predictions indicating further increases. The ramifications of this development are raising alarms across global trade networks.

Several factors converge to create what experts describe as a "perfect storm" in global trade. Bad weather conditions, prolonged ocean transits, and vessels skipping ports are compounding the already strained supply chains. Ocean carriers are being forced to either skip ports or reduce their time at ports, which affects the collection of empty containers needed for future shipments.

The timing of this capacity crunch is particularly concerning as it coincides with the period when consumer goods for back-to-school and holiday seasons are typically shipped. This surge in shipping demand is further exacerbating the situation.

The dramatic rise in rates could surpass those seen during the Red Sea spike earlier this year, which will inevitably affect consumer prices. The spot rates from the Far East to the U.S. West Coast are likely to exceed the levels observed at the height of the Red Sea crisis, highlighting the severity of the current increases. The rally in spot market rates has created a significant spread between spot and long-term rates. Since the end of April, spot rates have spiked by as much as \$1,500 on average for routes to U.S. coasts. Some of the highest contract rates charged by shippers have more than doubled from a month ago.

The current crisis is reminiscent of the chaos caused by the lack of available capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the pandemic period, some freight forwarders are being pushed to premium rates to secure space guarantees.



There has been warnings about the container crunch since January, attributing it to the longer routes required to avoid the Red Sea due to ongoing conflicts. The availability of containers has further been hampered by adverse weather affecting port operations in China, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Experts had forecasted sufficient container and vessel capacity to handle the supply chain issues, but reality has proven otherwise. Vessel space on many trade lanes is insufficient to meet market demand, affecting specific locations, carriers, and equipment types. The bad weather in East Asia at the end of April added to the delays, leading ocean carriers to skip some port calls or shorten turnaround times at destination ports. This has resulted in fewer empty containers being returned to China, exacerbating the imbalance in supply and demand.

The recent surge in ocean freight rates is expected to have significant economic implications. The logistics price increases will ultimately be passed onto consumers, contributing to inflation. During the pandemic, the Federal Reserve cited dizzying freight rates as a factor in rising inflation.

Logistics providers are already warning shippers, including major retailers, about the container shortage. The availability of containers is a critical issue as severe equipment shortages have led to shipment delays and backlogs. As a result, carriers are implementing substantial rate increases to capitalize on the sudden demand surge.

As the market adjusts to these unprecedented conditions, logistics managers are pushing forward peak season preparations to mitigate potential delays. U.S. companies are moving up the shipping schedule for seasonal items to ensure timely arrival and avoid discounts on late-arriving products.

Negotiations between the International Longshoremen's Association and the United States Maritime Alliance are ongoing, with a potential labor strike looming. This adds another layer of complexity to the already strained supply chain.

The imbalance in container availability and demand for exports from China has increased the rate. The stretched vessel capacity and shortage of containers are pushing rates up. The recent increase in demand for exports out of China, together with the dip in the number of repatriated empty containers, means shippers are starting to find empty equipment hard to come by at some export hubs. Logistics providers are responding to the crisis by adjusting their rates and implementing premium charges for "space protection." The huge rate increases could push the market to a new post-pandemic high, with spot rates continuing to soar and capacity out of Asia tightening.

In response to the volatile market conditions, shippers are being urged to make strategic adjustments to their logistics plans. Some may need to build up inventories earlier than usual to avoid potential delays during the peak season. Others might opt for premium rates to secure guaranteed space on vessels. Shippers have been advised to understand their supply chains and assess the risks involved. There is no single 'best solution' in such a complex market - it is a case of each shipper understanding their supply chains, assessing the risks, and using data to gain insights and make evidence-based decisions.

The shadow of black swan events looms large over the industry. In addition to the Red Sea crisis, there are ongoing restrictions in the Panama Canal and signs of escalation in the U.S.-China trade war. The announcement of new U.S. tariffs on imports from China and fears of port congestion in the Mediterranean and Far East add to the uncertainties.

The dramatic increase in ocean freight rates underscores the vulnerability of global trade to various disruptions, from geopolitical tensions to adverse weather conditions. Shippers and logistics managers must navigate these challenges with strategic planning and adaptability to mitigate the impact on supply chains and consumer prices. As the situation evolves, close monitoring and proactive measures will be essential to manage the ongoing crisis in global shipping.

The current container crunch highlights the need for resilience and flexibility in global trade logistics. By understanding the complexities of their supply chains and preparing for potential disruptions, businesses can better navigate the turbulent waters of international shipping.



Santanu Datta
General Manager
Ocean Freight

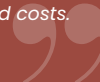


In ocean transport industry, having sufficient space on ships and containers is crucial. Most shipping companies use a mix of owned and leased containers, both short-term and long-term. They determine the number of containers needed based on the ship's size and its carrying capacity. The availability of containers also depends on the voyage duration, as longer voyages mean containers are engaged for extended periods.

For containers to be available at a port, the process relies on how quickly import containers are emptied and repositioned by the carrier. When the situation in the Red Sea worsened around mid-December 2023, carriers had to take a longer route around the Cape of Good Hope. This affected all shipments from Asia, the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East going to Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Americas. The average transit time increased by about two weeks.

This means container transit times on these routes are now two weeks longer, causing delays in the supply of containers to be used for the next shipment. This delay has led to a shortage of containers, forcing carriers to reduce free services like extra free time for container detention or demurrage which helps to get empty containers back into circulation more quickly.

Such changes impact shipping and logistics businesses by way of longer transit times, container shortages, delays in supply chain systems, and increased costs.



CSS GROUP DONATES GENEROUS SCHOOL GIFTS TO 600 CHILDREN



As the 2023-2024 academic year began, CSS Group with the guidance of Chairman T S Kaladharan continues the commitment to societal welfare by gifting young students, especially in pre-primary and primary grades. This is the 15th year Group has decided to continue with this social responsibility.



On June 1st 2024, 600 students in total from three primary schools received essential school supplies, such as school bags, umbrellas, and pencil boxes aiming to bring joy and encouragement as they start their educational journey. In addition, there also a lunch hosted for students, teachers, and parents, enhancing the sense of togetherness.

This annual event not only provides practical help but also instil pride and motivation in students. The efforts of CSS show the importance of corporate social responsibility and bring positivity to these little children's lives.



CSS Group wishes all these young students a successful academic year and looks forward to continuing this tradition in the years to come.

DOUBLE WIN FOR CSS AT THE FRIENDS SUPER CUP AND RFA

The Friends Super Cup recently concluded showcasing the remarkable talent and dedication of the CSS team. Among the many memorable moments and standout performances, the team's remarkable runner-up achievement demonstrated their exceptional skill and unyielding spirit throughout the tournament.



CSS's journey in the Friends Super Cup was defined by collective effort. Each match showcased the team's hard work and determination. From the very first game, the team set a high standard. What made them emerge as victorious was Safwan's incredible penalty save. Team members like Praveen, Adul, and John further highlighted the team's strengths. Their contributions on the field were instrumental in their success, with each player showcasing exceptional skill and a relentless drive to win. Behind the team's on-field success was the unwavering support and encouragement from key team members who were not always in the spotlight but have been indispensable to the team's achievements.

Vishnu's dedication and hard work were also pivotal in helping the team win. His commitment to the team and consistent performances were exemplary, earning him well-deserved congratulations on a job well done. His efforts embody the spirit of dedication that each team member brought to the tournament.



The team owes much of its success to the unwavering support of Britto Satheesh. His belief in the team and his constant encouragement were the driving forces behind the team's determination to excel. His faith in the players' abilities pushed them to give their best on the field, and for that, the team is immensely grateful. As CSS celebrates the runner-up finish in the Friends Super Cup, having defeated Tudo Mart FC to secure this position, we are filled with pride and motivation for the future. This achievement was possible due to the collective effort, resilience, and passion for the game.

CSS also emerged victorious at the RAF (RAK FOOTY ASSOCIATION) football tournament held on June 8th at Kharan Grounds. In an impressive display of skill and teamwork, CSS triumphed over FC Amigos with a decisive 3-0 victory. The match highlighted the exceptional performance of Safwan, who was named the best goalkeeper of the game. His remarkable saves and steadfast defense were pivotal in securing a clean win for his team. The success of the CSS team was not only due to their offensive prowess but also because of their strong defensive play, with Safwan's contributions being a standout element in their well-rounded and dominant performance.

The wins at the Friends Super Cup and the RAF tournament have been significant wins for the CSS team in one week. We extend our congratulations to every one of the team players and wish them to aim higher and achieve more in the future! The wins at the Friends Super Cup and the RAF tournament have been significant wins for the CSS team in one week. We extend our congratulations to every one of the team players and wish them to aim higher and achieve more in the future!

CSS IN KENYA

"With a team of seasoned professionals committed to excellence in sales, operations, coordination, and customs clearing, CSS Group's decision to open a branch in Kenya in 2023 marks a strategic move to tap into new markets & strengthen its presence in East Africa." The company is expanding its operations beyond the Middle East and Indian subcontinent. We have established the benchmark for excellence and efficiency in Kenya's shipping industry. Our skilled team members illustrate our commitment to offering top-notch services, as they bring expertise and abilities to every project. LCL Import and Export Consolidations supplies warehouse and distribution facilities throughout Kenya, overseeing complex customs clearance procedures, creating effective sales campaigns, implementing efficient coordination strategies, or ensuring smooth operations. With the resources available, the CSS Kenya Team can effectively and competently handle a wide range of shipping requirements.



Amith Radhakrishnan
Branch manager - CSS Qatar

CSS Kenya is committed to upholding its dedication to quality, dependability, and customer satisfaction even as it continues to expand its reach and capabilities. By prioritizing innovation and constant development, CSS Kenya is well-positioned to influence the future of shipping services in Kenya and abroad.

Kenya is recognized as a market that is expanding in several industries. Over the past few years, the nation's economy has grown significantly due to several causes, including a young and expanding population, rising urbanization, and government attempts to upgrade infrastructure and attract foreign investment. The manufacturing, financial services, tourism, technology, and agriculture sectors mainly power Kenya's economy. Mombasa Seaport, Nairobi ICD, and JKIA (Airport), SGR, are crucial for these developments.

Kenya is often considered the gateway to East Africa due to its strategic location and well-developed infrastructure compared to many other countries. The country's key port, the Port of Mombasa, is a significant entry point for goods into East Africa and plays a crucial role in the region's logistics and trade networks. Kenya's infrastructure development plans, such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) connecting Mombasa to Nairobi and other areas, aim to improve transportation and logistics efficiency within the country and the broader East African region.

Stable and efficient logistics are essential for promoting trade, investment, and economic growth. As Kenya continues to invest in its infrastructure and logistics networks, the prospects for logistics in the country and the region look promising.



Investors and businesses looking to access markets in East Africa often consider Kenya a strategic base due to its relative stability, infrastructure, and well-established business environment compared to other countries in the region.

Trends and Future

Mombasa and Nairobi Inland Container Depots (ICDs) collectively serve as a crucial gateway for logistics in Kenya and the wider East African region. While Mombasa's port is the primary entry point for goods arriving by sea, the Nairobi ICD plays a pivotal role in facilitating the transportation and distribution of these goods to Kenya's interior and neighbouring landlocked countries. Together, Mombasa and Nairobi ICD form an essential logistics corridor that supports trade and commerce in the region.

Mombasa Port as Entry Point : Mombasa's Port is the main entry point for goods coming into Kenya and the East African region via sea routes. The port's strategic location on the Indian Ocean coast allows for the efficient handling of various types of cargo, which are then transported inland for further distribution.

Nairobi ICD as Distribution Hub : The Nairobi Inland Container Depot, located in the capital city, Nairobi, is a crucial distribution hub for cargo transported from Mombasa. Goods arriving at the port are cleared through customs and transported by road or rail to the Nairobi ICD for further processing and distribution to various destinations in Kenya and neighboring countries.

Efficient Transportation Network : The road and rail network connecting Mombasa and Nairobi ICD plays a vital role in facilitating the movement of goods between the two locations. The Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) between Mombasa and Nairobi has significantly improved the efficiency and reliability of cargo transportation, reducing transit times and costs for businesses operating in the region.

Trade Facilitation and Customs Clearance : Mombasa and Nairobi ICD are equipped with modern customs facilities that streamline goods for import or export clearing. Efficient customs procedures help reduce delays and ensure the smooth flow of goods through the logistics corridor, enhancing trade facilitation and supply chain efficiency.

Regional Connectivity : The logistics corridor between Mombasa and Nairobi ICD extends beyond Kenya's borders, connecting landlocked countries in East Africa, such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to international trade routes. This regional connectivity enhances trade opportunities and economic integration within the East African Community.

Industrial and Commercial Growth : The presence of Mombasa and Nairobi ICD has spurred the development of industrial and commercial activities along the logistics corridor. Warehousing facilities, distribution centres, logistics service providers, and other related businesses have established operations in the vicinity to support the efficient movement of goods and services.

This logistics corridor's strategic importance is expected to grow as trade volumes increase and regional integration efforts continue to deepen.

As we look towards Kenya's future, it is clear that the path ahead is filled with challenges and opportunities. The growth and development of this beautiful country over the next 3 to 5 years will indeed be marked by unpredictability.

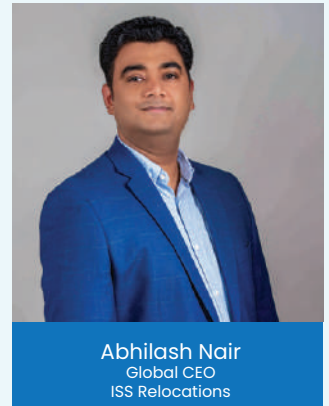
Kenya has the potential to achieve significant success in a number of areas, including technology, agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure, due to its dynamic economy, diversified population, and rich cultural legacy. By making investments in innovation, healthcare, and education, Kenya can establish itself as a regional leader and provide long-term prosperity for its people.

Let's continue to be proactive and full of confidence as we see the events in Kenya unfold over the next few years, working to create a strong, bright, and fair future. Kenya has several visions and development plans, and let CSS Kenya be a part of it.

Undoubtedly, we at CSS Kenya will expand with Kenya and other East African regions and participate in these developments.

TRENDS TO SEE - TRUE OR FALSE ?

A surge in ship power – Get ready for a tidal wave of new ships flooding the container shipping scene as we see, like a wave crashing onto the shore. This wave follows a period of big profits for shipping companies, who spent some of their extra cash on ordering brand-new ships. The scale of this wave is huge, as the capacity of the new vessels ordered is equivalent to good of the global fleet, which stood at lower 2020. But here is the catch: this significant increase is happening just when there is a drop expected in how much stuff needs to be shipped around the world, estimated to be around 3% to 4% for both 2024 and 2025. And there is more. Notably, a lot of these new ships are mega-ships, the giants of the sea. But here is the problem: they are not very flexible at ports, which makes it harder for shipping companies to choose where to send them. While companies can try moving ships around or getting rid of older ones, the shadow of this significant increase in ability still hangs over their profits and plans.



Impact of environmental rules like the Emission Trade System (ETS) – Regulations for controlling emissions and the costs of compliance are playing a key role in shaping the container shipping scene in 2024 as of now. The shipping world is facing some challenges due to the sky-high emission levels caused by using fossil fuels. To shrink the carbon footprint, governments and big global clubs have rolled out some pretty hefty regulations, and one of the stars of the show is the European Union’s Emission Trading System.

Geopolitical tensions and military conflicts – As we see promises an uptick in geopolitical tensions and military conflicts, with significant implications for the container shipping industry. These scenarios could trigger restructuring and duplication of supply chains, leading to shifts in trade patterns. Taiwan could potentially be a hotspot, akin to Ukraine situation. Such conflicts not only have direct consequences for shipping but may also result in economic sanctions and a reassessment of trade partnerships. Trade conflicts and economic penalties will disturb trade flows, pushing Western businesses to find other manufacturing sites to spread out risks. This might result in a move towards “nearshoring” and the rise of fresh trade alliances between nearby nations. The increasing investments in production capabilities in Mexico, for example, highlight this shift. Meanwhile, connections between Russia and China are getting stronger, and Chinese enterprises are putting money into Mexico to dodge tariffs.

Such developments compel companies to set up parallel supply chains targeting both Western and Chinese markets. The complexity of these situations means that solutions can only be found through political negotiations and bilateral dialogues, leaving the future of international maritime trade in uncertain.

Extreme weather conditions and their impact on shipping – This year as forecasted, which could result in extreme weather conditions affecting international shipping. For instance, low water levels caused by drought are affecting the Panama Canal, reducing its ability for fully laden vessels. Similarly, the Rhine River in Germany and the Great Lakes in the US are experiencing low water levels, posing challenges for inland navigation. These weather conditions have implications for container shipping, such as reduced volumes, changes in trade patterns, and increased pressure on alternative modes of transportation. The limited ability of waterways will also lead to a shift towards road and rail transport, resulting in higher costs and increased emissions. These extreme weather conditions are expected to continue influencing international shipping.



The new world trade: changes and strategies - In 2024, the world trade landscape is undergoing significant transformations driven by concepts like friendshoring, nearshoring, China + 1, decoupling, and risk reduction. While China keeps its position as a key player in supply chains, we are seeing a shift towards shorter and more diverse supply chains with increased economic ties within politically aligned blocs. This shift has led to the emergence of new trade routes and partnerships, with countries like Mexico and various Asian nations playing a larger role in American trade. Meanwhile, a sizeable part of the production of low-cost goods is moving to other countries, partly due to rising wages in China. These changes are resulting in more complex supply chains, where local issues can have international ramifications. Chinese companies are also investing in foreign firms to bypass sanctions and tariffs, further driving the shift of manufacturing ability.



The changing face of global trade - In the past, Western powers dominated global trade, while the East provided raw materials and affordable goods. But times are changing. China has become the world's manufacturing hub, with emerging players like India and ASEAN countries gaining prominence. As a result, the economic focus is shifting towards the East. Meanwhile, Europe is facing challenges with slow growth and recessionary trends, stepping back from its earlier global dominance. What does this mean for us in shipping - Get ready for increased trade with these growing markets. We will need smaller ships to adapt to these contemporary trends. Brace yourself for a transformative journey as we navigate through these changing waters, setting sail towards new opportunities in global trade!

Sailing towards sustainability and circular seas - The shipping industry is hoisting its sails towards greener horizons, navigating the waves of sustainability and circularity. With emission regulations tightening like a sailor's knot, major shipping giants are setting course for net zero emissions by 2040 or 2045. But it is not just smooth sailing - there is a tidal wave of demand from big players in export, retail, and manufacturing for eco-friendly solutions. From energy-efficient ship designs to the slow and steady rhythm of slow steaming, companies are riding the green wave. And let us not forget the voyage towards circular supply chains and reverse logistics, where waste finds a new port of call.

Navigating the seas of change - The maritime market is like a big ocean full of challenges and opportunities, from green goals to rules and some wavy situations like geopolitical tensions and supply chain issues. But do not worry! By embracing innovative ideas, being eco-friendly, and jumping into things with a cheerful outlook, we can steer through these difficulties and head towards a brighter, more eco-friendly future for global shipping. So, let us set sail together, ready to tackle whatever comes our way with smarts, flexibility, and a shared commitment to making our journey smooth sailing!

LCL DG Console From Shanghai To Jebel Ali



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Sales Coordinator

Awarded By
Shijosh Kunjumon – Branch Manager
(CKL – RAK)



March, 2024

Alosh Pavithran
Documentation Clerk

Awarded By
Muhammed Rowmahs – Manager
(Documentation)



April, 2024

Nandu Krishnan
Labourer (Homeward Bound)

Awarded By
Prasanth Kunnathullil Murali
Warehouse Incharge (Homeward Bound)



April, 2024

Nikhil P V
Coordinator (Transport)

Awarded By
Jayasankar Vasudevan
Manager (Transport)

TOP MANAGEMENT CSS GROUP

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Chairman

Chandrakala (CK)
Chief Operating Officer – NVOCC

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Oman & Northern Emirates

Krishna Kaladharan
Director – CSS Bahrain,
Saudi Arabia

Rakesh Menon
Director – Sales & Marketing

Roshmon Manoli
Vice President – Forwarding Sales

Renjith Pillai
Vice President – Projects

Santanu Datta
General Manager – Ocean Freight

Richard Varghese
General Manager – SCM & 3PL

Fida Asghar
General Manager – NVOCC
Sales

Susanth Shekar
General Manager –
HR & Administration

Sundhar Srinivas
Finance Manager

NORTHERN EMIRATES

Thomas Mathew
General manager

ABU DHABI

Midhun George
General manager

SAUDI

Ramesh Pillai
Senior General Manager

INDIA

Rahat Talreja Vice President – India Operations
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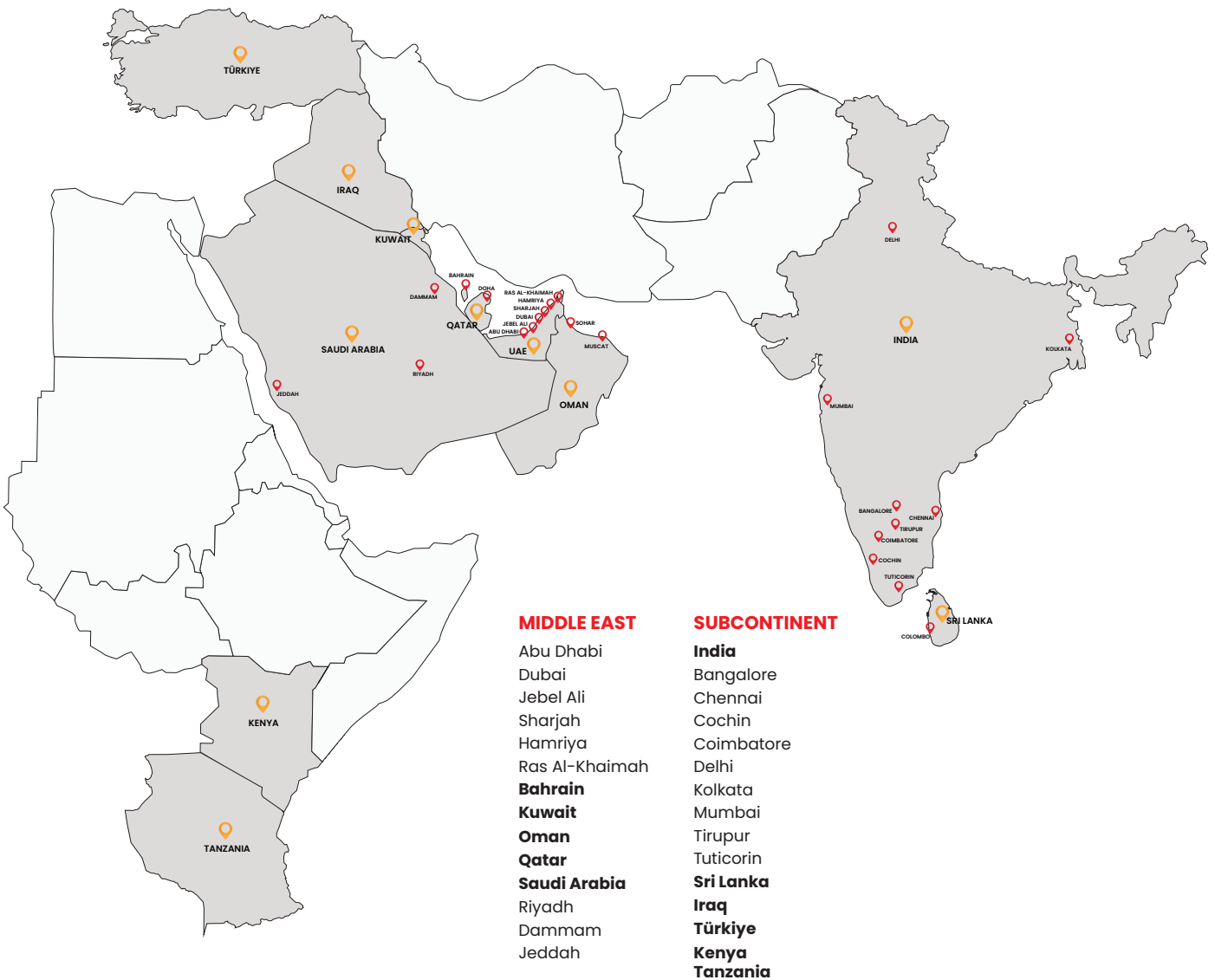
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CSS GROUP'S GLOBAL PRESENCE



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